By the Equator's Snowy Peak

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BY THE EQUATOR'S SNOWY PEAK

A RECORD OF MEDICAL MISSIONARY WORK AND TRAVEL IN BRITISH EAST AFRICA

DEC 1 3
THEOLOGICAL

BY

E. MAY CRAWFORD

(*née* E. MAY GRIMES)

AUTHOR OF 'A LITTLE SANCTUARY, AND OTHER POEMS'

WITH A PREFACE BY

The Right Rev. the BISHOP OF MOMBASA

AND A FOREWORD BY

EUGENE STOCK, D.C.L.

LONDON

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY

SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.

1913

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MY LIFE WORK

WHAT wilt Thou have me to do, Lord ?
What wilt Thou have me to be ?
Where wilt Thou have me to go, Lord
These are the questions for me.
One little life I can yield Thee,
Gladly 'tis laid at Thy feet,
May I be true to my Saviour,
Make my surrender complete !

Where Thou wilt have me to go, Lord
That is the country for me.
What Thou wilt have me to do, Lord,
Life's sweetest guerdon shall be.
What Thou wilt have me to be, Lord,
Humble, and loving, and pure,
May I be found to Thy glory,
Seeking the things which endure.

Choosing the things that Thou choosest,
Thinking Thy thoughts after Thee,
Joyfully witnessing, toiling,
This is the service for me !
Seeking the lost and the fallen,
Telling them Jesus has died,
No other life-work so precious,
These are the joys that abide.

PREFACE

TO all who have at heart the evangelizing of African tribes this book will be of more than ordinary interest. It describes the widening influence of the British Empire in large tracts of the East Africa Protectorate which have been, until recent years, closed to all but intrepid explorers. It also portrays vividly, and with grace and skill, the progress of medical missionary effort, from the very difficult beginnings in the face of hostile superstitions, to the days when the authoress and her husband were overwhelmed by the demands made upon each day of their lives by the crowds of eager patients, whose confidence they had won by their devotion and manifested kindness, as also by God's blessing resting on the doctor's successful treatment of the sick, and of those who had need of surgical aid.

The grand highlands of Kenia Province have now established in their hills and vales several mission stations and districts of the Church Missionary Society. Dr. Krapf, long years ago, penetrated Ukamba almost as far as the Tana River, and gazed on the mountain of whiteness, the snow-capped Kirinyaga, Mount Kenia. That splendid missionary and explorer had to retrace

his steps to the coast, yet he had a conviction that a coming generation would witness the journeys of white missionaries in that region which privations, sickness and death in his caravan had prevented him from entering. At the first possible moment, the C.M.S., faithful to Krapf and his heart's projects, sent its pioneers to take their lives in their hands and to evangelize Kenia and all the wild country stretching from the River Tana to the extreme north-eastern slopes of Mount Kenia. The Society, in its discharge of its responsibility to give full effect to Krapf's noble attempts to plant the standard of the Gospel in the highlands which are crowned with the glorious masses of Kenia and Aberdare, gave Mr. (now the Rev.) A. W. McGregor the privilege of first commencing missionary operations in Kenia, after a year or two of residence in Kikuyu.

Some of the results which have followed Dr. and Mrs. Crawford's brave undertaking may be gathered from the following words of an officer who holds high rank in the Protectorate :—

Fort Nyeri,
Kenia Province,
Dec. 2, 1912.

Dear Bishop,—It was some years ago that our valued friends, Dr. and Mrs. Crawford, came into this province and established a station in the Fort Hall district, where in the midst of privations and considerable hardships they carried on a work which has earned the gratitude and admiration of every officer in the Province.

The first occasion on which I saw Dr. and Mrs. Crawford in harness was when I was passing their station *en route* to a camp at Weithaga. The doctor was attending a crowd of natives,—men, women and children,—in all stages of sickness. There must have been at least two hundred at the time waiting to be treated. The number I believe was not exceptional. After spending some time at his dispensary and hospital, I visited the school, which was under the care of Mrs. Crawford. I was struck with the discipline which prevailed and the intelligence of the children, which could only have been brought to light by the devotion and the extraordinary patience of the teacher. I only mention this as an example of the good work done by this devoted couple.

After establishing a station in the Fort Hall district and putting it in excellent working order, Dr. and Mrs. Crawford were transferred to the Embu district, there to continue their good work. Their reputations had gone before them, and so they received a hearty welcome from the natives of the Embu district, though these people had only recently been brought under administration and were of a very primitive nature. The confidence of the natives was soon gained, and people from all parts of the district flocked to Dr. Crawford for treatment. Not only did he give his valuable services to the people, but he unhesitatingly placed them at the disposal of the Government, and many serious cases were sent to him for treatment.

The result of their work is very apparent in the number of natives of all ages who now attend the church and school for instruction, and in the good behaviour of the natives living within a radius of some miles from their station. Dr. and Mrs. Crawford have gained the confidence, affection and respect of every official and native with whom they have come in contact.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) C. R. W. Lane,
Provincial Commissioner,
Kenia Province,
British East Africa.

To the Right Reverend
the Bishop of Mombasa, D.D.

Readers will not fail to comprehend what the difficult and dangerous journeys have meant to a refined white woman; they will be delightfully interested in the narratives of the customs and habits of the tribes; they will be thrilled by the recitals of the doctor's experiences, in and out of hospital; they will gaze with deep pleasure on the many pictures painted in words by the authoress depicting village life and human need of sympathy and help; but more than all they will behold the workings of the Kingdom of God in purely heathen people. Very simply Mrs. Crawford lays bare the spiritual realities of missionary enterprise. Along with Christian kindness, medical skill, ceaseless endeavour to mitigate suffering, patient teaching and the exhibition of a Christian home, there are results visible which are not of earth, and which come neither from healing in the wards nor from Christian education in the school. There are effects which plainly are only wrought by God, effects which spring from the gift of eternal life. Young men are steadfastly resisting what they now know to be evil, though parent, friend and tribe bitterly persecute them. By what power? Men and women are publicly being sealed as God's children and servants, and are entering into union and fellowship with Christ in God.

Krapf looked long and wistfully at Kenia's gigantic peak and dazzling snows, and then, overcome by hardships, suffering and bodily

weakness, sorrowfully retreated from the Tana River and never made known the good news of the Saviour of the world to the Akikuyu. But between the place where he stood near the river and the forests of Kenia there are, on a long ridge, the C.M.S. medical mission house and hospital near Embu Fort, from which goes forth the healing for spirit, soul and body of heathen Africans by God's blessing; while many miles away is the rushing stream at Kahuhia, in a pool of which the first Christians, the firstfruits of the medical mission there, were baptized some years ago.

W. G. MOMBASA.

Bishop's Court, Mombasa,
Jan. 3, 1913.

FOREWORD

I AM glad indeed to have the privilege of introducing to the Christian public my old and dear friend, Mrs. Crawford. It is now nearly a quarter of a century since a young lady called on me at my old office in the Church Missionary House, and, introducing herself as Miss E. May Grimes, informed me that she had been unable to resist the call that had come to her after a missionary meeting at Richmond at which I was a speaker, and that she had come to offer herself to the Society. I passed her on to the Clerical Secretaries, and in due course she was accepted for training and directed to go to The illows at Stoke Newington, where the authorities of Mildmay prepared ladies for the mission field. Certain difficulties which then arose were overcome in so unexpected and striking a way that one could only recognize the hand of the Lord in the matter. Miss Grimes went happily through her training course, and was appointed by the Committee to the Japan Mission ; but, to her and my dismay, the Medical Board declined to sanction her going out. For, I think, two years she worked at the China Inland Mission Training Home, and this naturally drew out her special sympathy for China. To that great land she would gladly have gone, but again health considerations barred the way. Then came an opening in the less trying climate of South Africa, and she joined the South Africa General Mission. I was at that time on my travels in Australia and India, but when I reached England on a certain Thursday in April, 1893, I found

I was just in time to bid her God-speed, which I did at Waterloo Station on the Saturday immediately following, as she left on her new mission.

She left behind her some beautiful hymns and poems, which have made her name widely known, particularly 'A Little Sanctuary' and 'The Master comes and calls for thee'; and her letters from Pondoland during the next few years were greatly appreciated by a large circle of friends.

Meanwhile the Church in Canada was preparing to supply its own missionaries to the C.M.S. fields of labour, and among those who were so commissioned was Dr. T. W. W. Crawford. He was an admirer of Miss Grimes's poetry, and this led the way, when they met in England, to his approaching her with a view to her joining him in the highest earthly union and in the work to which he was called. He was appointed to East Africa; to their great joy the Medical Board, encouraged by her lengthened experience already in the Dark Continent, gave their consent to her going; and Dr. and Mrs. Crawford proceeded to the field so graphically described in the following pages.

So the young candidate of 1889 for foreign service found her way at last in the gracious providence of God to the Society which had first welcomed her. Truly His 'ways' are 'past finding out.'

I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

The author of this book, whose personal story I have thus sketched, has to some extent justified the original verdict of the doctors by her frequent bodily sufferings. But Mrs. Crawford, in much ill-health and amid many privations and perils, has done a noble work, and set us all a bright example of faithfulness and devotion. I commend the book with all my heart.

EUGENE STOCK.

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PART I

Weithaga

Look out upon the field, consider well
The gloomy darkness brooding o'er the land
Where Satan's seat is set. Ah! who can tell
The sin and misery on every hand?

Consider well the field—the bondage sore
Of captive souls within the tyrant's power;
Groaning for liberty yet more and more,
Groping for light, but lo!—a darker hour!

Consider well the field—the awful need
Of those who have not heard that *Jesus died*,
And face the solemn question: 'Why, indeed,
To millions is the lamp of life denied?'

BY THE EQUATOR'S SNOWY PEAK

CHAPTER I

Through the Bamboo Forest

SEPTEMBER 21, 1904, found Dr. Crawford and myself travelling up towards the highlands of British East Africa by the Uganda Railway. As agents of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, working in connexion with the Church Missionary Society, we had been designated to labour amongst the almost untouched Kikuyu tribe, where, in the heart of Kenia Province, Mr. A. W. McGregor had been living in great isolation for over a year. Such a railway journey is full of unique interest. As the higher altitudes are reached, the traveller is kept on the alert watching the herds of wild animals grazing on the plains. Zebras, hartebeestes and other smaller varieties of antelopes, giraffes and ostriches may all be seen, and occasionally even a rhinoceros or a lion. As the train steamed slowly on its way through the wilds, the

old caravan road, which crosses and recrosses the line again and again, was pointed out to us, and we thought of all the missionary heroes who had tramped along that weary track beneath the burning tropical sun. Especially we remembered those who had *never returned*, those who had laid down their lives in the attempt to plant the standard of the Cross in Uganda.

The journey from the coast to Victoria Nyanza which used to cover several months is now accomplished in a little over two days and nights. We ourselves left the rail at Kijabi, a point rather less than two-thirds of the entire distance to the Lake. Here, at the headquarters of the Africa Inland Mission, Mr. McGregor had arranged to meet us. Mr. Hurlburt, the Director of the A.I.M., was on the platform, waiting to welcome us as we alighted from the train. He had most kindly brought his mule to carry me, as the house is about three miles from the station. We wound our way in and out up a steep path cut through the jungle until we reached the mission station. It stands in a clearing of a great forest at an altitude of 7,500 feet, overlooking the Kidong valley, and commands a magnificent view. Eight hundred feet below lies the plain, now traversed by the 'iron horse,' where big game still abounds; and away beyond, the volcano 'Longonot,' now extinct, stands out in bold relief with its black-looking crater.

While awaiting the arrival of our future fellow-

EAST AFRICA

M.S Stations underlined.

worker we took a trip with Mr. and Mrs. Hurlburt to Lake Naivasha. The warlike Masai with their gleaming spears and decorated shields, herding their cattle in the rich pasture, came about us and interested us greatly. Hippopotami are numerous in the lake and may often be seen roaming on the shore.

Nothing could exceed the kindness of our American friends, and it was arranged that I should remain with them at Kijabi for three or four weeks, while my husband went on with Mr. McGregor to prepare for my reception at the new C.M.S. station, Weithaga, in Kenia Province. A caravan journey of about sixty miles lay before them, over hills and mountains, and through the dense bamboo forest which covers the slopes of Mt. Kinangop. We had heard much of the difficulties and dangers of this route, and Mr. McGregor himself had not found it easy to reach Kijabi. His verdict was that it would be impossible to take a lady through. When at last a messenger arrived with a letter from Dr. Crawford this opinion was confirmed, as he described the path through the forest as a terrible one. Mr. Hurlburt had most kindly lent him his mule for twenty miles or so of the way, and this had been a great help the first day, at the close of which they encamped on the border of the forest. The Doctor wrote from Mr. McGregor's station, which they had reached in safety, though he was exceedingly footsore and weary. He said that as he feared the rains might be beginning

very soon, he must start to fetch me in a week's time, and that he would take me another route, not through the bamboo forest, but across the Athi plains. Now although this was said to be an easier road, yet it was very much longer. Moreover some of the widest rivers had not yet been bridged, but had to be crossed on logs, which not infrequently were washed away in the rainy season. Some friends who were acquainted with this route declared that it was a dreadful journey, and that the heat was also very great on the Athi plains. In addition to this I was told that it was 'a great lion country,' and only a few weeks before a trader on his way to see Mr. McGregor had fallen a victim to one of these terrible beasts, which entered his tent one night and carried him off.

An intense desire to save my husband the long, weary trudge back on my account took possession of me, and as both routes seemed to present an equal number of difficulties there appeared to be little to choose between them. It will, therefore, be readily understood that when my kind host informed me that he had himself decided to take a *safari* (caravan journey) through the bamboo forest in order to see the chief Karuri on business, I jumped at the idea of such an escort, and felt that somehow or other the seemingly impossible would be made possible in answer to prayer. Mr. Hurlburt himself proposed that I should accompany him and the two other missionaries of the

The Author in her *Safari* Chair

A.I.M. who were going with him. They ' guaranteed ' they would get me through somehow, and their courage was inspiring !

Two men who were traders and hunters, who knew every bit of the country for many miles around, were consulted, and all the difficulties of the way were fully discussed. They said that there were some parts so steep that it might be possible for me to surmount them only by hanging on to the neck of a native ! There were also some very awkward places where mountain torrents had to be crossed, but altogether they were inclined to take a hopeful view of the proposition. Mr. Hurlburt wished to set out early next morning, so preparations had to be hastily made. Mr. Downing most kindly fixed my deck chair to two bamboo poles, and raw natives were engaged to carry our tents and luggage. About 7.30 a.m. on Oct. 4, 1904, the cavalcade might have been seen winding its way down through the jungle, and myself borne along in my chair by four almost naked savages, with four others in attendance as an extra team, the three American missionaries never far from my side, watching over me with the greatest thoughtfulness. Then came a long, single file of dusky porters, each with a load of sixty pounds on his back, suspended by a leather strap from his head. To swell the caravan were a number of mission boys, all full of excitement over the idea of a *safari.*

We made our way down to the railway, and

proceeded along the line for several miles, then branched off and began climbing a tremendously steep hill, where my chair had to be dragged through dense undergrowth, while at the same time we were impeded by overhanging branches of trees. We emerged at length upon the summit, and the panting porters threw themselves down upon the grass to recover their breath.

Nearly the whole of the remainder of that day was spent in traversing an enormous plateau with Mt. Kinangop looming dark before us in the distance. Elephant tracks were to be seen at intervals along the road, and we wondered whether we should see any of those formidable creatures, or whether a rhinoceros or buffalo would cross our path. But no, the caravan was too large and noisy for them to venture near, although we saw herds of wild animals in the distance, and zebras and ostriches abounded.

What an interminable tramp it seemed as we pressed on beneath the burning sun, longing in vain for the cool shade of trees, or the refreshing sound of running water! At noon a halt was called, and perching ourselves on some rocks we made a hasty repast, the menu consisting of potatoes baked on a camp fire, and tea without milk. Towards the close of the day we neared the bamboo forest, and there was Kinangop right overhead waiting to be scaled! The weary plain was left behind, trees became numerous and the whole landscape was very lovely in the soft evening

light. The swinging of the chair had produced sensations not far removed from *mal de mer*, and so it was an unspeakable relief, when at last the tents were pitched, to be able to turn in to my little stretcher bed.

The crackling of camp fires in the early dawn warned me that the caravan was astir, and, refreshed by a good night's rest, I quickly joined my kind friends for a picnic breakfast of boiled rice, and shortly afterwards we were on the march again. The path now became very overgrown, but brushing aside the tangling branches, we pushed cheerily on into the forest enjoying the keen morning air. Only one European lady (as far as we could ascertain) had ever been through the bamboo forest before. This was the wife of a Government official from Fort Hall. It is in parts very swampy, and the natives who carried me were frequently struggling in deep mud, and it would require all the additional porters to steady my chair and guard it from accident. At times, too, it had to be hauled up almost inaccessible places, and at others to be dragged through an almost impenetrable wall of bamboo. Yet through all the difficulties my poor bearers pressed on with marvellous patience and perseverance. And my missionary friends, though they fell again and again in the muddy swamps, and clambered panting up slippery and precipitate paths, were always brave and cheerful, and their courage was infectious.

It was worth a great deal to see that marvellous forest, with the delicate tracery of the bamboo foliage, the trailing vines, the lovely begonias and the wealth of ferns and staghorn moss. At one point an elephant had just broken through, tossing some great bamboos across the path, and leaving his giant footprints deeply embedded in the soil. Buffaloes are numerous in the forest glades, and leopards and other beasts of prey lurk in its deep recesses; while in the lower altitudes of the mountain, where many varieties of beautiful trees cover the slopes with perpetual green, myriads of long-haired (Colybus) monkeys sport themselves amongst the lofty branches.

Towards the middle of the day we reached the neck of the mountain just below the rocky peaks, an altitude of about 11,000 feet. I had never been so high up in my life before! The view was simply grand! But we were not through the forest yet. Very soon we were enclosed in thick undergrowth again, and towering bamboos shut us in on every side. We now began the descent, which was in places exceedingly steep. Drenching rain retarded our progress by rendering the pathway fearfully slippery. Sometimes there was a mountain torrent to cross and the chair needed the most careful handling. Down, down we came, the porters warily picking their footsteps, until in the afternoon we emerged from the forest and began threading our way up and down amongst the foothills of Mt. Kinangop. It was about

A Kenia Waterfall

4.30 p.m. when the tents were pitched for the night, and oh, how welcome was the rest after the strenuous travel of the day ! Many of the natives came round us, all willing to make friends, and selling us milk, sweet potatoes, yams and bananas.

On the following morning the encampment was astir very early, and by 6.30 we had had breakfast (boiled rice again !) and struck our tents ready for the last day's march. We were enshrouded in a thick mist which gradually developed into heavy rain. Yet in spite of this drawback, our hearts were full of praise to our loving Father Who had brought us thus far safely on our way. A series of awkward places now confronted us, and to intensify the predicament we were all drenched to the skin ! The rain poured persistently down the back of my chair so that I was soon sitting in a pool of water ! At the time I think we scarcely noticed these little drawbacks, so absorbed were we in overcoming the difficulties of the road.

The path wended its way first of all down a hill that was almost vertical. How I ever reached the bottom in safety was a matter of marvel ! A magnificent waterfall broke upon our gaze, and just above it the Maragua River had to be crossed. Great shelving boulders formed the bank. A more impossible place to carry a lady in a chair could scarcely be found ! Yet, being but a poor climber, I could not trust myself on foot ; and so it transpired that I was borne down over the rocks

and across the river in a manner that was truly incredible. Two of the A.I.M. boys proved as watchful over me as were the missionaries themselves, and one could dare a great deal with such an escort. At the bottom of the next two hills, which were frightfully steep, were streams bridged only by a single plank, and indeed the word 'plank' is altogether too civilized a term to use, as in each case it was simply the trunk of a tree, roughly hewn in half, and rendered very slippery by mud and rain. The second of these was of a great length, and some eighteen feet beneath it was a rushing stream with sharp stones jutting out of its rocky bed. It was to my mind the most dangerous place of the whole journey. I dared not venture across such a narrow and slippery bridge on foot, and, as it must needs be traversed, I committed myself to God, and remained in my chair. Had a single porter slipped we must have been hurled into the river, the balance was so extremely critical; but God mercifully kept their feet and brought us in safety to the other side. Meeting one of the A.I.M. missionaries a few months ago he told me that he still held his breath to think of me being carried across that log bridge!

From eleven to one o'clock we halted, and the boys cooked a brace of partridges for our dinner which had fallen to Mr. Staffaucher's gun. Natives crowded around, staring at me open-mouthed, especially the women and children, who probably had never seen a white woman before. At first

A Diminutive Kikuyu Nurse

Three Kikuyu Girls, showing Ear Ornaments

they ran away in fear, and were with difficulty persuaded to return. However, an old man came and held my hand to show them that I was quite harmless, whereupon they gradually crept nearer, and were ultimately prevailed upon to come and greet me. Then they wanted to touch my clothes, and hair and face, and began to chatter to me in a language which, of course, I could not understand.

A distant hill was now pointed out as Mr. McGregor's station, and as the mist and rain cleared off and the sun shone out we made much better progress. Up and down we went over ridges and valleys until we reached the foot of the Weithaga hill, and as all our hearts overflowed with thankfulness I suggested we should sing the Doxology. Out ran Mr. McGregor, all astonishment, followed a little later by my husband who, on seeing such an imposing caravan approaching, had first rushed to put on a collar, thinking it must betoken a visit from the Provincial Commissioner! But when he discovered the facts of the case he came tearing down the hill with a face aglow with surprise and delight!

Mr. McGregor was very much afraid that the Provincial Commissioner of Kenia Province would resent the fact of my coming into the country before the iron house was finished, as he had laid down the law on the matter more strongly than I was aware. So Dr. Crawford dispatched a letter to Fort Hall at once to notify my arrival. The answer came next morning in the shape of six native

policemen and a corporal, sent to mount guard over my tent 'until further orders'! Later on a kind letter came from Mr. Hinde, the Provincial Commissioner, saying that he would gladly do what he could to assist us, and that he had 'already taken precautions for Mrs. Crawford's safety by sending some native *askaris* (soldiers) to guard her tent.'

At the time of which I am writing the Weithaga station had only been opened a few months, and being destitute of trees, presented rather a dreary aspect; although the magnificent panorama of hills all around, stretching away to Mt. Kinangop on the west, and to the snow-capped peak of Kenia on the north, more than compensated for the lack of beauty in the site itself. The altitude being about 6,000 feet the nights are cold, and even when the sun is exerting its power there is always a refreshing and invigorating breeze.

No sooner had we arrived and settled into our tent than the autumnal rains (if indeed one may use such a term in this land of perpetual summer) began in good earnest. No one who has not undergone the experience could have the least idea of the discomfort of camping under such circumstances! For three weeks we had to endure it as best we could. Outside the tent, in rain or shine, paced an askari, with rifle and fixed bayonet, ready to salute us as we passed in and out; and whenever I went for a stroll with my husband at sundown there was always an attendant bodyguard! At last the little iron shanty was finished,

and we were glad to be under a roof once more, although, being destitute of any lining, it formed but a poor protection from heat by day and from cold by night. Moreover nothing would induce the mud floor to dry !

CHAPTER II

In the Heart of Kikuyu

LIKE some solemn sentinel, snow-capped Kenia seems to mount guard over the province that bears its name. Far away up into the blue it rears its mitre-shaped peak, and eternal glaciers sparkle in the tropical sunshine, breaking up into mountain torrents which dash down the deep rifts and chasms in its rocky sides, to terminate below in the many beautiful and swift-flowing rivers which render the country so fertile. Below the frost line is a wide belt of bamboo, of palest grey-green. Lower still a yet broader belt encircles the mountain, of a deeper, warmer hue, and in this vast primeval forest the lordly elephant reigns supreme, for the foot of man has seldom penetrated its recesses. Silhouetted against the pale evening sky, its snowy pinnacle reflecting the rosy tints of sunset, Mt. Kenia appears as a vision of glory! Perhaps it is equally arresting in the stillness of the early dawn, when, as if awaking out of sleep, the mountain gradually throws aside the soft, fleecy clouds which cling around it like gossamer drapery,

until it stands out clear and majestic in the brightening sunlight. There is a perpetual sensation of loss in the landscape when for months together the mountain is veiled from view by low-lying clouds and only an occasional peep is vouchsafed after some heavy storm or night of pouring rain. Can it be wondered at that *Kirinyaga* (mountain of dazzling whiteness) should be regarded as the centre of the religious life of the simple savages who for centuries have gazed at its lofty summit, declaring that *Ngai* (God) Himself or *Mweni Nyaga* (possessor of whiteness or purity), as they sometimes call Him, dwells amidst its untrodden snows?

Mt. Kenia, which in altitude (17,000 ft.) ranks after Ruwenzori and Kilima Njaro of all the mountains of Africa, and which stands on the equator,[1] was discovered by the great pioneer missionary of the C.M.S., Dr. Krapf, in 1849. In constant danger of his life, and destitute of a tent or any creature comforts, this devoted servant of the Cross, whose one ambition was to extend the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour in the interior of Africa, penetrated as far as the bank of the Tana River in Ukamba with the hope of founding a mission station there. It was the Kamba tribe who taught him to call the great mountain Kenia, whereas if only he could have gone farther, and explored the country of the Akikuyu, it would doubtless have been known to the world by

[1] The equator cuts through its northern slopes.

its true name, Kirinyaga. But for the white man to venture into the wilds of Kikuyu until within a few years ago was to meet almost certain death. In passing through the border of this country the caravan of Bishop Hannington was held up, not only by the fierce Masai, but by the Akikuyu also, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they escaped with their lives, being unable to comply with the exorbitant demands of the people.

Perhaps it was not without reason that the Kikuyu people resented the coming of strangers. Inter-tribal warfare was a matter of constant occurrence and rendered them extremely suspicious. Their hand was against every man and every man was against them. On their eastern border the Akamba oppressed and troubled them; and the wild Ndorobo, who inhabit the forests and live entirely by the chase, were a constant thorn in their side—though it is probable that the Akikuyu dispossessed this tribe of their territory when they conquered the country many generations ago. But perhaps most frequent of all were the raids of the warlike Masai, who, pouring over the mountains to the west and south-west, would sweep down upon a village at night, carrying off women and children, and as many cattle, sheep and goats as they could lay their hands upon, whilst spears hurtled through the air, and blood flowed freely on both sides.

Ah! if the grand old mountain could only speak, what stories it could tell us, not only of the raids

[*Photograph: Binks, Nairobi*

A Masai Warrior

of the Masai, but of the coming of the Arab caravans, of the remorseless cruelty of the slave dealers, the pitiless lash and thong, and the unavailing cries of those who were torn away from their homes and kindred never more to behold them again. Alas! the Akikuyu, like their neighbours the Akamba, learnt at last to sell their own children into slavery.

But with the coming of the British dawned a somewhat brighter day for the Kikuyu tribe, though they were naturally slow to recognize the advantage. After much difficulty a fort was established near the Mathioya River on a hill overlooking the Athi plains, sixty miles from Nairobi, which was afterwards known as Fort Hall, in memory of its founder. From this centre the whole province of Kenia (including roughly speaking a radius of sixty or seventy miles round the mountain) was administered by a provincial commissioner. As the country was gradually brought into subjection other Government stations were opened which were presided over by district officers. At the time of writing there are four forts in Kenia, namely, Fort Hall, Fort Nyeri, Fort Embu and Fort Meru. The Tana River divides the province into two sections; in the Cis-Tana section are the Akikuyu proper, to the number of some 450,000, and the Trans-Tana section is occupied by other tribes which are branches of the Kikuyu family, speaking different dialects of the same language, numbering about 550,000,

making quite a million in all. These kindred tribes comprise the Ndia, Embu, Chuka, Mwimbi, Theraka and Meru, all inhabiting the territory east and north-east of Mt. Kenia. In some of these districts white men are still prohibited from travelling owing to the extremely unsettled state of these savage peoples.

The Tana River, which rises in Mt. Kenia, forms the principal waterway to the Indian Ocean, and into it all the lesser streams of the country are emptied. Being well-watered, Kikuyu is not only beautiful but exceedingly fertile, and the soil supplies the natives with a liberal and varied diet. Maize, millet, canary seed, sweet potatoes, yams, cassava, bananas and several varieties of beans, besides tobacco and castor oil trees, may all be found growing prolifically in the carefully cultivated gardens which produce two harvests a year. Honey is greatly prized, so much so that a fine of thirty goats may be inflicted on any one who dares to steal a beehive! These beehives are made from sections of trees, hollowed out and closed by discs of wood at each end, cracks being left for the bees to crawl in and out. They are suspended from the branches of high trees as a rule.

The altitude of the Kikuyu hills ranges for the most part between four and six thousand feet. Although almost on the equator the climate is temperate, and varies very little all the year round, the thermometer seldom rising above 80° in the shade, or falling below 50° on the coldest

[*Photograph : Underwood*

A Kikuyu Chief and his Sixteen Wives

nights. The hottest months are from December to March. There are two rainy seasons, the longer one lasting from March to June, and the shorter one from October to December.

The great primeval forests, which must once have covered a considerable portion of the province, have gradually been cleared away, except around the base of the mountain, where they are so extensive as to require several days to penetrate. Portions of forest, however, still remain in some parts of the country, especially in the vicinity of Mt. Kinangop ; and many fine old groups of trees have been allowed to stand as sacred groves, where sacrifices are offered to the ' White God.' Such places are supposed to be frequented by departed spirits and are regarded with reverence. All uncultivated land is densely covered with rank weeds, coarse grass or tangling bushes, where leopards, hyænas and wild cats lurk.

The flora of the country is disappointing, a lovely crimson lily, with clinging, vine-like tendrils, being alone worthy of note, unless we include the begonias of the forest.

Among the endless foothills of the great mountain nestle the beehive-like homes of this interesting tribe, peeping out from banana plantations or obscured by trees and undergrowth. In the old days of unceasing inter-tribal strife the more entirely the village could be hidden from view the more complete would be the feeling of security. Even the narrow pathway leading up to it would be

made as tortuous as possible with the object of ‘ fooling ’ not only their enemies but the evil spirits also ! These evil spirits were certainly not purely ethereal, as even within the precincts of his own tribe a Mukikuyu dared hardly venture on his neighbour's hill or ridge such was the risk of injury and even of death !

A homestead is nearly always built on a hillside, and is generally surrounded by a hedge of thick-growing bushes. The size of the village will naturally depend on the wealth of the owner. A poor man must content himself with a single hut for himself and his wife, while a rich man's homestead may consist of eight or ten little beehive erections, each of his wives having a home of her own. The huts are circular in shape, with low walls, not more than three feet high, built as a rule of mud and sticks. They are not infrequently padded with bracken fern, or other greenery, to give additional warmth. The conical roof is supported by four posts, on which rest many long, straight poles, all converging to the apex. Upon this framework a substantial layer of bracken fern is placed and then the whole is thatched with coarse grass. A hurdle forms the door, being lifted into its place to close the dwelling at night, or during the absence of the owner. Owing to the doorway being so low that it can only be entered in a crawling posture, the interiors are of necessity exceedingly dark, such an innovation as a window being altogether remote from the savage mind !

A Kikuyu Homestead

In the centre of the mud floor is the fireplace, this being indicated by a slight round depression in the surface, on which a few hearth-stones repose for balancing the cooking-pots. The sides of the hut are divided into several partitions, each of which contains a rough wooden bedstead (usually built of sticks or in some cases of a single plank supported on posts) standing about two feet from the ground. Low wooden stools, on which the inmates squat round the fire, are the only other furniture excepting a few gourds and cooking utensils. A fire is seldom allowed to die out, but if it should be extinguished it is soon kindled again by means of two sticks which are rubbed together to create friction, one being of hard and the other of soft wood. Besides the houses there are the granaries, which are in reality large baskets on poles, although their thatched roofs give them the appearance of tiny huts. A stockaded enclosure for the safeguarding of the cattle at night occupies a part of the village compound, but the calves, sheep and goats are usually accommodated within the huts. It may here be mentioned that the cattle are of the zebra variety, with a hump on the back. Should a calf die the skin is sometimes removed, and having been carefully sewn together, it is stuffed with dried grass, in such a way as to resemble life as far as possible. The cow will lick it over and, apparently satisfied with the dummy, will let her milk flow. Without this ruse it would be impossible to obtain any !

A visit to a Kikuyu homestead at sundown well repays the missionary who would study the life and customs of the people. One is generally received with friendliness, especially if the visitor can speak to them in their own language. Let me endeavour to set before my readers a sort of 'cinematograph picture' of such a scene. If it be a large village there may be a withered old granny squatting at a hut door, or one or two aged men clad in scraps of ragged and dirty goatskin, warming their skinny hands over a handful of fire on the ground, and now and then refreshing themselves with a pinch of snuff from the tiny gourds which are suspended from their necks. Some little naked youngsters are playing close by. A mother with a wee baby tied on her back is sitting on the ground shelling beans. Standing by her side is a little girl trying to hush the cries of a bigger baby with which her small shoulders are weighted. Two or three women now return home after a day of toil in the fields, one bearing a basket of maize cobs, the others with huge loads of firewood strapped on their backs, a merry little fellow of two or three years of age sitting aloft on one of the bundles. Throwing down their burdens the women begin to prepare the supper which, the evening being fine, will be cooked in the open air. A big earthenware pot is set up on some hearth-stones and a fire is soon blazing underneath. Peeping into a cooking-pot we distinguish through the steam a thick brown porridge made from Kaffir-corn

Photograph: Binks, Nairobi

A Kikuyu Woman, with Load of Firewood

meal. Some sweet potatoes and bananas are being roasted in the ashes.

Just at this juncture a herd of sheep and goats come trooping into the village, driven by the small herd boys who cast hungry glances in the direction of the cooking-pot! Presently the cattle enter, some of the cows lowing loudly for their calves which have been tied up in a hut, or browsing with the goats all day. Meanwhile the men of the homestead having sauntered in, a young warrior brings a dirty gourd, and squatting down on his heels, proceeds to milk a cow. But now the sun is sinking beyond the distant hills, and darkness will quickly fall upon the landscape. So with the greeting *Tiguo uhoro!* (Remain in peace!), which is exchanged with *Thie uhoro!* (Go in peace!), we hastily pass out of the enclosure and hurry back to the mission station.

CHAPTER III

A Study in 'Ebony';

or, The People of the Tribe

THE most interesting event after our arrival at Weithaga was the welcome extended to me by the Kikuyu women. Led by their chieftainess, Wangu, they ascended the hill in hundreds to perform a dance in my honour. Nothing would content them but that I must be dragged into the centre of the ring, to endure with as cheerful a countenance as I could muster the din of their savage song and the smother of dust raised by their feet. A presentation of a sheep followed, and after this Wangu seemed to claim me as her particular friend! She is quite a remarkable person in her way, and is the only female chief we have ever known. Probably she would never have been recognized by the Government in this capacity had not her husband, to whom the authority of sub-chief was originally given, proved incapable, while Wangu demonstrated herself to be 'the better man of the two'! With well-oiled body, draped with skins, smeared with red clay and grease and ornamented with an amazing

quantity of beads, Wangu is well able to hold her own as the 'leading lady' of the country!

Every Kikuyu woman wears a 'tailor-made' costume, the goatskin clothing being shaped and sewn by the men; and she is very particular about the cut, although the fashion is unvarying from year to year! Her skirt hangs long behind, terminating in two points or tails, and is folded across a short leather apron in front. A goatskin cape, suspended by a string from one shoulder, covers the upper part of the body, but is usually laid aside during manual work. The women have their own methods of dressing the skins, which are rubbed with fat until quite soft and pliable, when they are frequently smeared over with red clay. White or coloured beads are sometimes sewn into the seams and round the edges of these garments, thus rendering them ultra-stylish!

It is strange how dearly an African loves a decoration of beads! The Kikuyu women are sometimes quite heavily laden with them. Large hoops of beaded wire hang from their ears; and bead necklaces, varying in number according to the estimation in which they are held by husbands or lovers, are strung around their necks. Young girls are decorated with a frontlet of beadwork over their foreheads, and a kind of corset of blue and white beads just below the waist. Beads are not, however, the only ornament. Coils of brass wire, kept brightly shining, are worn on the arms and above the ankles, if the woman be a person

of any importance. If she has attained the rank of *mutumia* (a married woman with grown-up children), she must keep her head entirely shaved, and also insert huge brass rings in the distended lobes of her ears. The younger women shave the front and back of the head, leaving only a circle of hair on the crown. As soon as a girl is able to take a part in the general work of the village, her hair is cut in this curious way, and the wretched custom of distorting the ears begins. Three punctures are made in the upper edge, into which small sticks of equal size are inserted. A much larger hole is made in the lobe, which is continually stretched by the introduction of chunks of wood. These are again and again replaced by wedges of a larger size until the lobe is so extended that it will sometimes reach to the shoulder. Necklaces are often threaded through the ears, making it somewhat difficult and painful to turn the head. Little girls seldom wear anything but a small leathern apron, and a string of beads round the neck.

As I sat in the centre of the ring of merry women and girls dancing in my honour I could scarcely realize what strenuous lives they led, but this I found out by degrees, as we watched them come and go day by day, and visited them in their villages. Though practically slaves from childhood they bear life's burdens very philosophically, and are generally ready with a laugh and a jest. See the tiny girl of four or five years trotting bravely along with a

[*Photograph: Binks, Nairobi*

A Kikuyu Woman

baby almost as big as herself on her back! Look at her again, as she follows her mother with a bundle of sticks poised on her slender shoulders, or a little gourd filled with water from the river! As she grows year by year the burdens will become gradually heavier and heavier, but her muscles will be so strong that she will usually carry them cheerfully. We have seen women carrying loads of firewood that weighed quite 180 lbs.! The small Kikuyu maiden is early taught to handle her little cultivating knife in the gardens, digging and weeding all day long beside her mother; then after assisting to carry home the produce of the fields, she must help to cook the food for the lazy men folk at sundown! If not engaged in the fields, the women may be seen busily employed at home, pounding maize in a large wooden mortar, or grinding the corn on a smooth slab of stone, by means of a smaller stone which they work to and fro with their hands. This latter process, being accomplished in a kneeling position, must be very fatiguing.

Sometimes when taking a walk in the cool of the day we have come upon a number of women pounding sugar-cane for the brewing of native beer. For this a large log of timber is felled, and as it lies on the ground a long row of holes resembling mortars is carved on its surface. Pestles of hard wood are prepared, about six feet in length and each weighing seven or eight pounds avoirdupois; with these the cane is pounded to a pulp, which is

then carried to a group of men sitting near, whose duty it is to wring out the juice. This is poured into large gourds and allowed to ferment. A still more intoxicating drink is made from honey. Pottery is an important industry which is entirely in the hands of the women. They will travel many miles to procure the right kind of sand, and it is really remarkable with what skill they will fashion the large cooking-pots which are so much in demand.

A Kikuyu woman scarcely knows what idleness means. Her leisure moments are occupied with the manufacture of string bags which are used for carrying the garden produce or the ripe corn from the fields. Even when she has become habituated to attending the mission service on Sunday, she may be seen in her place in church busily plying her fingers as she pulls the threads in and out, while a half-finished bag lies on her lap. The twine for these bags is made by a method which would hardly commend itself to friends at home, namely, by chewing strips of wild ramie fibre in the mouth before twisting them into string.

Although the women have no share in the discussion of public affairs, yet in buying and selling they are experts. Were it not for the native markets which are held every fourth day at recognized places all over the country, there would indeed be little to sharpen their wits. But the constant bargaining over the exchange and sale of their wares and garden produce tends to somewhat develop their otherwise dull and torpid minds.

The market is a place of social reunion, and between the hours of eleven and twelve in the morning, when the fair is at its height, it presents a seething mass of black humanity.

Of recreation the women and girls have little, but on moonlight nights they come out to dance on the open spaces outside the homesteads, and the hillsides echo with the shrill trilling of their peculiar song. It is only as a woman advances in years that she may hope to meet with much respect from the other sex. Young men are expected to step out of the path to allow an old dame to pass, if it be a very narrow one. The head wife of a member of the *Kiama* (council of elders) is permitted to be present at the tribal councils; of this privilege, however, the women seldom avail themselves. During a woman's existence she passes through the following stages:—(1) *Karegu* (little girl); (2) *kiregu* (big girl); (3) *muiretu* (marriageable girl); (4) *muhiki* (bride or young married woman); (5) *wabai* (mother of young children); (6) *mutumia* (mother of children who have attained their majority); (7) *kiheti* (old woman).

Peeping out from the leather cape by which it is fastened to its mother's back, a Kikuyu baby gets its first impressions of life in general! When able to use its legs the naked little mite toddles after her wherever she goes, getting an occasional lift when tired. A few years later (if a boy) he is herding the goats on the green sward outside the homestead, and a very 'happy-go-lucky,' jolly

little fellow he is, with his brown limbs unfettered by any clothing, except perhaps a tiny piece of goatskin slung from one shoulder. Small notice is taken of him until the time draws near for his initiation into the tribe, which may take place at any age between fourteen and eighteen years, but it must be preceded by a ceremony known as the 'second birth.' His ears are now pierced and distended by a circular piece of wood, which must cause him a good deal of pain. Three or four months before his initiation the boy begins to dance in company with other youths who are preparing for the rite. Painting their bodies over with white pipeclay, they drape themselves with Colybus monkey and serval cat skins, while at the same time carrying sticks and small wooden shields which are attached to the upper part of their arms.

A large concourse of relatives and friends gathers together to dance on the eventful day, and after a sacrifice has been offered the boys are initiated. They are now recognized as warriors, and strut about with an air of great importance. No work is expected of them, and henceforth the herding is left to the younger lads. Idle amusement and sensuality are the only features which stamp their present existence. To acquire a sufficient number of goats for the purchase of a wife becomes the object of their ambition. The price is fixed by the prospective father-in-law, and will be about thirty goats, but it may vary according to the price paid for the girl's mother ; nothing, however,

A Native Village

Kikuyu Boys in Ceremonial Dress

must be said about the price at the first interview. If the young man has taken a fancy to a girl whose elder sisters are still unmarried he will probably be told that he must either transfer his affections to one of these, or be prepared to wait until they have been disposed of, as it is contrary to the custom of the tribe for a younger daughter to marry before the elder ones.

When possibly fifteen to twenty goats have been paid over the marriage may take place. The young man then presents the girl's father with a sheep, and the following day, accompanied by his relatives, he goes to the bride's home, carrying gourds of beer and clusters of bananas. The girl's relatives are also assembled, but she herself must not appear. Festivities open with a beer drink, and then the two mothers lead off in the Kitiro dance. After this the respective fathers retire for a consultation. When they rejoin the company a sheep is killed, and presently all the men are squatting round the little fires they have kindled roasting bits of meat in the flames. Before the feast begins all the women disappear, as it is not correct for them to witness the men eating meat! If the bridegroom is rich, a second sheep is sure to be demanded for the benefit of the elders who are present.

A few days later, after other preliminaries have been completed, the young man waylays the girl and carries her off struggling and screaming to her new abode, or he may depute his warrior

friends to capture his bride, or even the old women of his village! Her girl friends follow her and live with her for several days, bringing her all the food she needs, and abusing the bridegroom whenever he puts in an appearance! At length to get rid of them he gives the girls a substantial present of fat and food, and thus propitiated they consent to return to their homes.

The bride, meanwhile, keeps up a constant wailing for over a week, which can be heard for some distance around the village. During this period she refuses all the food offered to her by her husband, and will eat only that which is sent to her by her mother or girl friends. Custom demands that during the first eight days after her capture, the fire must never be extinguished within the new home or in the mother's hut. At the end of this time the bridegroom presents her with a new suit of skins, which he has in all probability shaped and sewn for her himself. His own girl friends then appear on the scene, their duty being to deck the bride out in her new clothes, which they proceed to rub so profusely with red clay and castor oil that the costume fairly shines. The young wife's skin must be treated in the same way, and her head must be shaved, leaving only the prescribed circle of hair on the crown. Beaded hoops of wire are fastened in her ears, and if the bridegroom be wealthy he will complete the toilet with a number of bead necklets. Thus attired she is carried in triumph to her mother's village, the girls taking

it in turns to bear her on their backs until they arrive at their destination. When the visit has been paid they carry her off again to the bridegroom's abode. She is on no account allowed to spend a night at her old home, however much she may wish to do so. Before the conclusion of the first month after his wedding the young man is expected to provide a large feast for his own relatives and friends.

To have only one wife is considered a sign of poverty. The women themselves are in favour of polygamy, as they do not care to be left to do all the work of the village and gardens alone. The first wife, however, retains her superiority, and her first child will be regarded as the eldest even if born after the child of the second wife. Each wife has her own hut, granary, and plots for cultivation. A rich man may have possibly six or seven wives; the paramount chief Karuri is said to have as many as seventy!

Twins are considered very unlucky. If they happen to be the first-born children they must both be killed. First-born twins of goats and sheep must also be sacrificed. If a child has had the misfortune to cut its upper teeth first the poor mite may have to pay for this calamity with its life, unless a sacrifice can be arranged.[1]

In the Kikuyu tribe the stages of a man's existence are as follows:—(1) *Kahee* (little boy); (2) *kihee*

[1] Since the British Government have taken over the country such customs have been suppressed, as far as possible.

(big boy); (3) *mwanake* (warrior); (4) *githiga* (father of young children); (5) *muthuri* (elder). When he enters the *githiga* class he is expected to give up dancing with the warriors.

Before the coming of the white man a goat's skin suspended from the shoulder was the only covering of the men, but now a piece of dirty American cotton, sometimes covered with red clay, is the fashion, or in some cases a coloured blanket is draped loosely over the body. The elderly men of the tribe allow their grizzled, woolly hair to grow quite naturally, and are content to leave it without ornamentation; not so, however, the dandy warrior, who bestows much time and care on his hair-dressing. Different styles prevail in different districts Some imitate the Masai, who wear a top-knot in front, and a thick pigtail hanging half-way down the back. To obtain this result strands of wild ramie fibre are interwoven with tufts of the hair, those in front being so firmly bound together that the top-knot stands out stiff and straight several inches beyond the forehead. In a similar way the numerous strands of fibre are tied together into a long, thick queue at the back of the head. This is wound round with strips of sheepskin, and the entire head-dress is then oiled and smeared with red clay. Another style is to interweave innumerable little strips of fibre with the native ‘ wool ’ in such a way as to resemble long hair. When thickly coated with red clay and mutton fat the deception is

[*Photograph: Binks, Nairobi*

A Masai Warrior, with Jam Pot Ear Ornament

complete! Yet another method, much in vogue, is a head-dress of black vulture feathers, each feather being attached to little tufts of hair. Red clay and fat are often so liberally smeared, not only over the head, but over the neck, chest and shoulders also, as to be literally streaming down the body when the warrior has completed his toilet for a dance!

Ornaments, too, must not be forgotten! Of these the most important are those for the ear. Large wooden discs are inserted in the distorted lobes, or if the young brave can get hold of a jam pot or a cocoa tin for this purpose, so much the better! A metal collar with a fringe of slender chains adorns his neck; a few bead necklaces will probably be added, and some coils of thick brass wire decorate his arms and legs. A highly ornamented shield and flashing spear give the final touch of swagger to his appearance. The old men are much more simple in their tastes, a special kind of chain ear-ring, perhaps a brass necklet, and some coils of brass wire being their only ornamentation.

In spite of the idle propensities of the sterner sex, there are some branches of work which fall exclusively to their share. In the cultivation of the soil their part is to break up the ground by means of long wooden stakes, sharpened to a point at one end; the women then come in with their cultivating knives, digging out the grass and weeds, and rendering the surface smooth and even. Hut

building, which has already been described, is entirely the responsibility of the men folk, with the exception of thatching. The only really skilled workmen are the blacksmiths, and these are regarded with equal veneration as the medicine men, while nothing is more to be dreaded than a blacksmith's curse.

We have sometimes peeped into a smithy—just a round shed on poles—to watch them fashioning the iron ore in their primitive but ingenious way. The forge consists of a hole in the ground, lined with tempered clay, which is filled with a charcoal fire. The curious double bellows are made of goatskins, neatly sewn together so as to exclude the air, and triangular in shape. Into the apex a wooden pipe is inserted which, when the bellows are in use, is securely pegged to the ground, and to its extremity another small pipe made of baked clay is attached. This nozzle rests on the edge of the furnace. To the wide mouth of the bellows at the opposite end two smooth flat sticks are sewn. Holding these sticks in a vertical position the operator opens and shuts the mouth of the bellows, thus forcing the air into them, and emptying them again. It will be understood from the above that there are two goatskin bodies to the bellows, but only one nozzle. A boy sits on his heels between them working each alternately, so that a continuous blast is the result. Four solid blocks of granite form the anvils, and the only other instruments employed are some iron

A Kikuyu Warrior, with Head-dress of Ostrich Feathers

hammers and tongs. From this crude workshop quite highly finished weapons, implements and ornaments are turned out.

As the Mukikuyu grows in years he is held in increasing esteem, which culminates in his being admitted to the *Kiama*, or council of elders, of which I shall have more to say later on.

CHAPTER IV

Where Ancient Cults prevail

THE Kikuyu race are a branch of the great Bantu family, of which there are so many varieties in the Dark Continent. Their manner of life is precisely the same as that which obtained amongst their forefathers of a thousand years ago. As their grandfathers and grandmothers have done before them so do they, and their minds are darkened by the same strange and foolish superstitions which enslaved their ancestors.

The government of the tribe was originally patriarchal, each elder being the head of his own village. They were divided into many different clans, each of these having its own Kiama or council of elders to whom all affairs of importance were referred. There were a few chiefs, but their authority was somewhat restricted, and they were expected to act in concert with the Kiama. When the British Government stepped in, much greater power was given to the chiefs, who were also made responsible for the collection of the hut tax. The councils of elders were placed entirely in abeyance

Warriors in full War Attire

until quite recently, when, it having been found by experience that many abuses had crept in owing to the arbitrary power vested in the chiefs, the authority of the Kiama was again restored, with considerable advantage.

The *athuri* (elders) are admitted to the Kiama by election, followed by an initiation ceremony. They hold their courts in the open air, sitting on the ground in a circle. The assembly is controlled by the president of the Kiama, who has been specially elected to this office and who acts in the capacity of chairman, introducing the subjects for debate, and maintaining order throughout the session. His rank in the tribe is second to that of the chief. The latter may or may not be a member of the Kiama, as several of the chiefs known to ourselves happen to be younger men, belonging to the *githiga* class. The first speaker holds a stick in his hand, and when he has finished what he has to say he passes it on to the next one who wishes to obtain a hearing, no one being permitted to express his views without it. By this simple method order is maintained. A plaintiff when laying his case before the court has a number of short sticks in his hand, and as each important point in his argument is reached he throws one on the ground. A fine of so many sheep or goats is the most usual penalty imposed upon offenders, varying, of course, according to the heinousness of the crime; but a persistent thief, or a murderer, or a wizard, used to be burnt

alive or drowned. One such case came before our notice when a chief who was calling at our station in passing informed us that he and his people had just burnt a *murogi* (poisoner), by shutting him up in a granary, and kindling a fire underneath it. This case was tried by the authorities at the Fort, but, owing to the extreme ignorance of the people and the fact that they considered they were conferring a public benefit, no 'malice aforethought' could be established. So the prisoners were dismissed with a warning under any circumstances not to inflict capital punishment in future, this being the prerogative alone of the Government.

Members of the Kiama carry a staff of office, and wear a particular kind of brass ear-ring. They also have their own peculiar greeting which may not be used by those outside the privileged class. It is upon the elders that the duty of sacrificing to *Ngai* (God) depends. This is carried out with much solemnity in the precincts of a sacred grove, or at the foot of some tree set apart for this purpose, and which must never be felled. The elders march in procession to the spot, one carrying a calabash containing beer, others bearing firewood, and a sheep bringing up the rear. While all present gather round the tree, holding their hands aloft, the chief, if present, or the leading elder offers prayer to *Ngai* in some such language as the following: 'O God, we beseech Thee to bless us! Increase our cattle, and our sheep and goats! Give us children! Send rain upon our fields that

we may enjoy a fruitful harvest!' While offering these petitions he pours some beer down the trunk of the tree. He then plunges his knife into the heart of the sheep, which has previously been stretched on the ground and suffocated. The blood having been collected in a calabash, together with the liver and the heart, a long strip of fat is wound round the tree. A fire is then prepared, and, after the sheep has been roasted in its embers, the elders feast upon the meat, half of which, however, is laid at the foot of the tree as an offering to God. At the conclusion of the feast all rise simultaneously to their feet, extending their hands toward heaven, chanting a song. Such sacrifices are offered on a vast number of varying occasions.

Sometimes their beer drinks seem to partake of a religious character. The presiding elder will pour out a little of the *njohi* (beer) from a calabash, while muttering a prayer; not until then is the liquor freely circulated. None below the rank of elder have hitherto been allowed to drink intoxicating beverages, except the aged women; but this good old custom is gradually being broken through.

The elderly people of the tribe have a curious way of bestowing a blessing by spitting on the head of the favoured individual! It is also considered a token of good will to spit on one's hand before extending it to greet a friend! It does not do for a missionary to reject such a mark of friendship, though it really requires a little nerve to reciprocate

the grip! Respect for elders and superiors is very conspicuous, and the reverence that prevails for parents might well teach the younger generation of civilized nations a lesson. Beyond this, however, there is little of an uplifting character in their morals. True, they are a merry and lighthearted people, living very much in the passing moment; but falsehood, treachery and sensuality seem to be bred in their very bones, and it requires untold patience and earnestness on the part of the missionary in seeking to counteract these tendencies in Christian adherents. Notwithstanding this we have met with one here and there whose natural character seemed to be superior to the general degradation of his neighbours, and who was eager to respond to elevating influences.

In common with all African tribes the Akikuyu are intensely superstitious, and give credence to charms, witchcraft and evil spirits. They have some vague belief, however, in a Supreme Being, whom they fear rather than love. In times of drought, famine or other calamities, they turn to the great White Spirit, stretching out their hands in supplication toward Mt. Kenia, or towards Mt. Kinangop. They affirm that *their* god is the White God, but that of the Masai is the Black God!

Almost every form of ordinary disease and affliction is attributed to the malevolent agency of departed spirits, by which they are kept in constant terror, and which must therefore be appeased at all cost. They believe that after death a man's

ngoma (ghost) haunts the place of his decease, and may be continually working them harm. A hut where a person has died is a place to be avoided, and a village may be entirely deserted if believed to be thus haunted by *ngoma*. There are some spirits which are said to have passed into forms of animal life. Amongst these is a curious green caterpillar upon the track of which, if it enters the homestead, they rub fat, to break the evil spell. A particular variety of mongoose is greatly dreaded for the same reason. *Ngoma* are said to enter into hyænas, and a goat must be sacrificed for purposes of purification should one steal into a village at night. There is also a superstition that the spirits of the departed frequently enter living people. Madness is generally attributed to this cause. It is said that ghosts can be heard dancing and singing in the woods at night. Their actual place of abode is supposed to be in the depths of the earth, whence they emerge occasionally to frequent the forests, or the vicinity of their old homes.

Amongst the Akikuyu exists a mysterious secret society known as the *Itwika*, or worship of the snake. This we have discovered to be nothing but a huge fraud! In the Mathioya and Tana Rivers there are supposed to be enormous black water snakes, called *ndamathia*, which are objects of great veneration. Once about every six years a feast is observed in their honour when cattle, sheep, beer and honey are brought to the river. So great is the awe inspired by the *Itwika* that no one dares

to venture outside the huts on the day of the festival, except the members of the society. These go in procession to the river blowing sacred horns. At the unwonted sound the snake is supposed to rise to the surface, when a goat trough is at once launched into the stream loaded with meat, honey, bananas and beer, as an offering to the *ndamathia*. The reptile, it is said, partakes of the feast and soon becomes intoxicated ! Some hairs of the neck are then extracted to be employed as charms, and after a great banquet on the bank of the river the whole company march back singing their *Itwika* song. None but members of the society are permitted to witness the ceremony and the most absolute secrecy is maintained with regard to all their doings. Huts are specially erected for the worship of the snake, in which the sacred horns are secreted. The object of this ridiculous superstition seems to be the enrichment of the fraternity by means of the entrance fees charged, which are payable in goats. Directly a new votary has been initiated he is informed of the deception and sworn to secrecy. Christianity has no more bitter opponents in Kikuyu than the followers of this fraudulent cult. Loving darkness rather than light, they resent all that makes for progress.

The African is essentially a lover of the dance, and none more so than the Kikuyu tribe. They have quite a variety of dances, the principal ones being as follows :—

1. The *Mambura*, which is confined to young

lads who are about to be admitted into the full privileges of manhood.

2. The *Kibata* or war dance. In preparation for this the warriors paint their bodies with pipe clay and red ochre, and encircle their heads with huge head-dresses of ostrich feathers. Around the waist is strapped a leather girdle, from which depends a skilfully made sheath containing a sword. Thus grotesquely arrayed they assemble for the dance, and to a strange grunting accompaniment they leap into the air in perfect unison ; then they spring from side to side, bending forwards and jerking their heads and bodies in an extraordinary manner. This is kept up until the point of exhaustion is reached.[1]

3. The *Gichukia*, a social function, which is performed around a large bonfire by members of both sexes at night. One of the performers leads off in a song which is responded to by a chorus of voices, the whole company swaying their bodies to and fro.

4. The *Gitiro* is the women's dance, and may be celebrated on any occasion of rejoicing. The most elderly woman present stands in the centre of the ring and starts their own special song, each one dancing up to her in turn, while a curiously high, trilling chorus and grunting accompaniment is maintained, all beating time with hands and feet.

In preparation for most of the dances it is usual to

[1] Shields and spears are sometimes used in this dance.

anoint the bodies and garments very liberally with red clay and grease.

Of course there are a great many in every community who are debarred from participating in the dances and other tribal festivities owing to physical infirmities. For these, apart from their own nearest relatives, there is but little help and sympathy. Indeed, if the disease be at all of a loathsome character they are regarded with positive aversion. It is the custom to carry the sick person into the bush directly they fear that the illness may terminate fatally. In some cases a relative may watch close by until death occurs, but, as a rule, the unhappy sufferer is left alone, without shelter or protection, and with the gruesome certainty that the dreaded hyæna is lurking not far off in readiness to devour his body.

Should a death occur in a village it is customary to throw the body out into the neighbouring thicket to be eaten by these horrible scavengers. A chief, or leading elder, or even an aged woman, may, however, be buried, provided they have sons who have attained their majority; but in any case the persons who have touched the dead body will afterwards have to undergo purification by the medicine man.

A Kikuyu Medicine Man, with Stool and Reticule

Medicine Man performing Ceremony of Purification

CHAPTER V

The Medicine Man

AMONGST the Akikuyu there is not a more interesting personality than the medicine man. He is, of course, a most shocking old fraud, but that does not prevent persons of all sorts and conditions flocking to him for advice. Indeed he thrives on their credulity, and in his worldly-wise way he finds his occupation most profitable! He is naturally much in evidence both in the religious and social life of these primitive people, and is known by two names: first, *muraguri*, which means fortune teller or prophet; and secondly, *mundu mugo*, physician and priest. It is supposed that he is called to his vocation by God, Who appears to him in a dream, or vision, and tells him he must become a medicine man. This call he proclaims to the people of his village next morning. At sunset he disappears into the woods to communicate again with *Ngai*, returning to his village at break of day to announce once more that he has been chosen by the Great White Spirit to be a *mundu mugo*.

Another witch doctor is now called in to initiate the new candidate, who must be an elder, into the mysteries of his profession. This personage arrives on the scene equipped with his leather reticule of gourds containing medicines, and a *mwano*, a gourd filled with small, round stones, beans, fragments of iron, etc., with which he professes to foretell future events. These are presented to his disciple, who is instructed to go to the river and gather more small stones to augment his outfit. A goat is then sacrificed, and a small piece of the skin is fastened round the neck of the calabash as a charm. The flesh is cooked and eaten by all who have assembled to watch the proceedings, whilst native beer is provided for the benefit of the elders alone.

The candidate is then initiated into the use of the *mwano*, and the art of fortune telling and prophecy. He is also shown how to compound medicines from native herbs and roots, and how to concoct charms. After this he is looked upon as a member of the profession, and as such he may be consulted. In his office of *muraguri* he spreads the skin of a goat upon the ground, shakes up the stones in the gourd and casts them out like dice, professing in this way to forecast future events.

Possibly a young warrior may come to consult him as to whom he shall choose for a wife. Or if a man is sick for a long time and the medicines prescribed have failed to bring about a recovery,

the *mwano* is cast to ascertain the cause. Should goats or sheep fall sick and die without any apparent reason, the *muraguri* must be resorted to. Or if a friend is away for a long time the prophet is consulted as to his whereabouts, the state of his health and the possible date of his return. Should the client wish to take a journey he will probably go to the *muraguri* to ascertain the most suitable season for his departure. The fee for such services is only two or three pice, equal to two or three farthings, or their equivalent in kind. But in any case it must be 'cash down,' as he is distinctly averse to the credit system!

In sickness of every sort the medicine man is consulted. He is sometimes also called in to drive away evil spirits from a homestead, or to protect it against thieves, infectious diseases, witchcraft or poison. Or should the owner of a village desire an increase of cattle, flocks, crops and children, the *mundu mugo* is summoned, and the wishes of the elder explained to him. Then, standing erect in the centre of the village, the witch doctor elevates his pouch of medicines, and looking away towards the summit of snow-capped Kenia, he prays that he may be given wisdom in overcoming the evils which exist in the homestead, and that good luck and prosperity may result. He then seats himself on his stool, and placing several pieces of dried banana bark before him on the ground, he puts medicine from his gourds upon each, his client meanwhile sitting opposite to him.

He next produces a goat's horn and after mixing the different medicines together upon the banana bark, he proceeds to pour the whole concoction into it. The open end of the horn is sealed up with bees' wax, which is studded with beads. The small end is then pierced with a boring instrument, and through this hole a fine iron chain (of native workmanship) is introduced. This is given to his client to be worn around his neck as a charm, a means of warding off impending evils, and as an aid in bringing prosperity. The owner of the village now presents the medicine man with a ram or he goat which he drags around the homestead and gardens. The circle being completed he returns to the village, and the animal is sacrificed, cooked and eaten by all present. The great man does not, of course, forget to collect his fee, which, varying according to the ability of his client to pay and his own professional standing, may amount to one or two sheep.

The Akikuyu have very little sense of sin as we have been taught to understand it, but they are very particular about ceremonial defilement. Touching a dead body, eating the flesh of a fowl, or of any wild bird, animal or fish proscribed by tribal custom, handling poison, digging a grave, the breaking of a cooking pot on the fire, a wild animal breaking into a hut, and a whole host of other things are known as *thahu*, i.e. defilement. The person who has been defiled sends at once for the *mundu mugo* and begs to be cleansed, other-

wise he is regarded as an outcast, and his wife will refuse to cook for him.

Thus solicited, the medicine man immediately makes his appearance, and the sacrifice of a sheep or goat takes place without delay. Taking his bag of medicines in his hands, he lifts it up above his head, and turning towards the mountain he invokes the assistance of *Ngai*. Having prepared a small hollow in the ground, which he has lined with banana leaves, he places in it the contents of the stomach and intestines of the animal which has just been sacrificed. To this offal is added some concoction from his gourds. Then going to the thicket outside the village he gathers some twigs, which he ties together in the form of a small broom. He lays it on the ground beside the hole, placing the front foot of the sheep beside it, then dips both into the offal, which, the patient having opened his mouth, he proceeds to apply to his tongue! The order is pronounced, 'Vomit,' whereupon the patient must spit upon the ground.

While this process is being repeated again and again a long list of actions supposed to have caused ceremonial uncleanness is recited. At the conclusion the sheep's foot, dipped in the offal, is applied to the person's tongue, and again he is commanded to vomit. The twigs are now divided into two bundles, which are once more dipped into the unpleasant mixture in the hole, whereupon the *mundu mugo* and his patient rise to their feet. Commencing with the top of his head the physician, with the

bundles of twigs in his hands, briskly brushes the person's body all over with the offal, ending with his feet. When this is completed the medicine man informs him that his *thahu* is expelled ! Leaving his patient, he now takes the bunches of twigs, and enters each of the huts of the village in turn and, proceeding to brush the walls with his brooms, he pretends to sweep out the defilement. Last of all he collects the sheep's offal together, and carries it out into the bush, at the same time saying, ‘ I drive *thahu* out of this village.’

On returning, the medicine man again sits down in front of his patient, and requests him to stretch out his hands, palms upward, and close together, as if in the act of receiving something. Pouring out some white chalk-like substance from one of his gourds, he draws a line with it on the out-stretched palms, as well as on the forehead, nose, throat and abdomen of his patient, afterwards making similar marks on his own body. Some medicine is then mixed in the extended hands, and the man is told to swallow it. The flesh of the sacrifice is now cooked and partaken of by all except the patient himself. It is supposed that his uncleanness would return were he to participate in this feast. The *mundu mugo* then departs, after having been compensated for his important services with a substantial fee.

Witchcraft is said to be practised by evil spirits which have taken up their abode in human beings, and calamities of many kinds are attributed to their

malevolent influence. Should witchcraft be suspected the medicine man is called in, and after the usual ceremony of prayer he draws from his reticule a small antelope's horn, which has been previously filled with some kind of 'medicine' and sealed up with bees' wax. With this horn in his hand he searches in and around the homestead, scraping up the ground with it at the roots of trees, in the cultivated plots and by the sides of the dwelling-houses. Finally he brings forth something which he declares to be the source of all the trouble. This may be some débris wrapped in leaves, or a piece of a human skull, the hairs of a man's head, or a bit of stick or stone surrounded with leaves. Whatever it is there can be little doubt but that it has been secreted there for the purpose by the cunning old *mundu mugo* himself! The discovery affords great relief to the superstitious minds of his clients. The usual sacrifice of a sheep is now offered and its flesh feasted upon, and then the medicine man, having made some mysterious passes with his little horn, pronounces the spell of witchcraft to be broken and the village purified. Two or even three sheep are ordinarily the price paid for this service.

There can be no doubt that many of the medicine men are adepts at the villainous practice of poisoning. Their supposed skill in drugs is used occasionally for the injury rather than the benefit of their neighbours. The word *orogi* stands for both witchcraft and poison. *Murogi* signifies a poisoner or wizard. While in some cases they may pretend

to overcome the spell of witchcraft, at other times they may themselves weave a yet more deadly spell around some unfortunate member of the community.

It is said that a *murogi* will creep out into the bush where a dead body is lying, and, after going through some incantations, will command the corpse to arise. Whereupon it is supposed to awaken and, sitting up, to inquire the reason why it has been disturbed. The wizard then commands it to curse certain people, with the result that sickness, loss of property or even death is expected to follow. Another method attributed to the *murogi* is that of visiting a corpse in the thicket for the purpose of extracting some teeth, hairs or nails. These relics he wraps up carefully in small packets, and secretes in the village, or in the pathway where his victim is likely to pass. And so terrible are the fears which will be instilled upon the discovery of the *orogi* that he will immediately fall sick unless a medicine man can be summoned without delay to offer a sacrifice and counteract the evil spell. Such cases where help has not arrived opportunely have often been known to terminate fatally, so powerful is the influence of mind over matter!

In common with many other African tribes the ordeal ceremony is practised in order to determine the guilt or innocence of a suspected party. For instance, a crime such as murder, theft or arson has been committed, and the perpetrator of the deed is unknown. It may be that several suspected parties are arrested and brought before the council

of elders with the local chief. The *mundu mugo* is then requested to prepare a *muma* or ordeal, and several tests may be applied. In minor cases the suspected person is told to incise his leg with a knife and then to lap up his own blood from the wound. If guilty it is expected that he will die very shortly.

Another test is to tell the suspected person to plunge his bare arm into a large pot of boiling water (into which the medicine man has poured some of his drugs) and bring out an axe-head. If guilty he will be severely scalded, but if innocent no harm will be done ! Yet another test is to heat a sword red hot in the fire, putting ' medicine ' upon it, and telling the person suspected to lick it with his tongue. If innocent he is expected to escape injury ! A goat is sometimes sacrificed and its blood retained in a banana leaf to which the *mundu mugo* adds a concoction of his own. The suspected culprit is commanded to lap up the blood, and if guilty his death may be anticipated, but if innocent he is expected to escape !

Such are some of the superstitions with which these simple savages are bound, and in which they have the most implicit faith. A woman will rather part with anything she possesses than relinquish the charm which she obtained from the witch doctor, and which she usually carries suspended by a leather thong from the broad leather belt round her waist. These charms are generally made up of some of the *mundu mugo's* so-called ' medicines ' contained in tiny goats' horns, and sealed up with

bees' wax. It will be readily seen that there is scarcely a circumstance of life amongst these primitive people in which the medicine man does not play a part. It is therefore hardly possible to overrate his influence in the tribe, especially as he always claims to be guided by *Ngai* in his decisions. Naturally enough he is bitterly opposed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, though he may veil his antagonism with discreet politeness. Darkness must ever be opposed to light. When he discovers that the missionary has not only come to preach and teach, but also to second these efforts by medical and surgical skill which is altogether beyond his comprehension, and which attracts the people to him in thousands every week, then the native 'quack' begins to tremble, realizing that his prestige is on the wane, and that his sun may presently set, never to rise again

PART II

Kahuhia

WHAT THEN?

What then? Why then another pilgrim song,
  And then a hush of rest divinely granted,
And then a thirsty stage (ah me! so long!),
  And then a brook just where it most is wanted!

What then? The pitching of the evening tent,
  And then, perchance, a pillow rough and thorny,
And then some sweet and tender message sent
  To cheer the faint one for to-morrow's journey!

What then? The wailing of the midnight wind,
  A feverish sleep, a heart oppressed and aching,
And then a little water cruse to find
  Close by my pillow, ready for my waking

ANON.

CHAPTER VI

Across the Athi Plains

WHEN Dr. Crawford and I first entered Kikuyu there was not a single Protestant missionary in the whole of Kenia Province with its million of souls, excepting Mr. McGregor. Quite singlehanded he had succeeded in planting a mission station in the centre of the country, and its influence was already being felt for miles around. Several hundreds of natives crowded into his Sunday service week by week, and the school, which included amongst its scholars some of the paramount chief's own sons, was very well attended. My husband opened a dispensary which the people soon began to appreciate ; and all our spare time was taken up with the study of the language. There were no books to facilitate our progress excepting a tentative Gospel of St. John and a small vocabulary, for which we had to thank our energetic fellow worker, who, having been for some years in charge of a station on the borders of Kikuyu, had acquired some knowledge of the vernacular. This station, known as Kabete, and situated nine miles from

Nairobi, he left to the superintendence of the Rev. H. Leakey, when he set out on the more arduous undertaking of pioneering in the wilds of Kenia Province.

We had only been a few months at Weithaga when all unexpectedly came an order that we should proceed to Kabete, to take charge of the work there during Mr. Leakey's absence on sick leave. As nearly all our possessions had been unpacked, no little labour was involved in preparing for another long journey. Having had sufficient experience of the bamboo forest we decided to take the other route and traverse the Athi plains. This led us past Fort Hall, where the government of Kenia Province is administered. Here we were most hospitably entertained by the Acting-Commissioner, Mr. H. R. Tate, who rode out several miles to meet us. After a quiet Sunday at the Fort we resumed our *safari*, the doctor riding his mule, and I being carried in a hammock. Before leaving the Fort, Mr. Tate warned us to be especially on our guard against lions, and we engaged two native warriors to act as night watchmen, their duty being to keep fires burning around our encampment.

Winding our way down a long cutting we reached the Maragua River, which we crossed in a boat, and toiled up a long, weary ascent on the other side. The great Athi plains now stretched before us, teeming with wild animal life. Herds of antelopes, zebras and ostriches roamed over the

veldt, sometimes coming close to our caravan. At noon we lunched under some trees by a rippling stream, then pressed on again till dusk, when we encamped under a wide-spreading tree, and a circle of fires was kindled to guard us from wild beasts.

The third day's *safari* was a trying one, as my husband was thrown from his mule and I had two bad falls from my hammock. The heat was intense, being the hottest season of the year. By the time we reached the Thika River in the afternoon we were exceedingly weary. Here some native policemen were stationed to work a pulley for the transport of Government supplies and mails bound for Fort Hall. There was no other means of crossing the river in those days. A steel cable was stretched from one bank to the other, and from this a small board platform was suspended by iron supports attached to each corner. About forty feet below flowed the wide river infested (so we heard) by crocodiles and hippopotami. Only one person could cross the pulley at a time. I must confess to a feeling of profound thankfulness when I regained *terra firma* on the farther side! One by one our trunks and bales and packing cases were bound on to the plank platform and swung across. The mule alone had to swim through the fast-flowing river. A rope fastened round its neck was thrown across to the opposite bank and firmly held by several men, while others whipped the poor beast down into the water. But in a few minutes she was struggling up the steep bank.

We had already noticed a 'white man's' camp in the distance. My husband left me to rest under the shade of some bushes while he climbed the hill to reconnoitre, and choose a place for our encampment. As he approached the tents of the *Wazungu* (Europeans), out rushed a military-looking gentleman in khaki, Colonel Lumsden, C.B., of 'Lumsden's Horse' fame in the Boer War, razor in hand and his chin all lathered with soap!

'I hear,' he said, 'that there is a lady at the river, so I am hurrying to shave!'

The 'lady' in question would gladly have adjusted her own toilet, but there was no opportunity, and half an hour later she was sipping tea in the Colonel's tent, while he and his friend, Mr. C. B. Branch, chatted with the doctor. They were, of course, on a hunting expedition, and their splendid camp was full of trophies, which were shown to us in due course. Rhinoceroses and hippopotami, hartebeestes and wildebeestes, had all fallen to their guns.

Our tents having been pitched we retired for a rest and change. The kind and hospitable hunters had invited us to dine with them, so when darkness fell and the stars peeped out we made our way back to their tent, where we spent a very pleasant evening. Colonel Lumsden informed us that we had arrived just too late to taste of a delicacy much prized by sportsmen, rhinoceros-tail soup!

The last thing at night a poor little donkey was tied up to a tree just outside the encampment as a

bait for lions, this neighbourhood being specially famed for them, and the hunters being very keen to add some to their bag. Camp fires were blazing in every direction when we returned to our tents, and sentinels were already pacing to and fro as a guard against wild beasts. But although the roar of lions had been heard a few nights before, no such excitement disturbed our rest, and the donkey was still quietly grazing under the tree when morning dawned.

Never shall I forget the burning heat of the plains this fourth day of our journey. We travelled on until nearly sundown, covering some twenty-nine miles, and all the afternoon the sun beat mercilessly upon our faces. My careless porters again let me fall from the hammock, a decidedly unpleasant experience, as the pole comes down with a crack on your head, while your spine gets a shock from the too sudden embrace of mother earth. In passing through some swamps covered with waving papyrus we detected the footprints of lions, and no doubt the lordly beasts were lurking among the reeds at no great distance from our path. I had been carried through many streams in the course of our *safari*, and now, before we camped for the night, the very awkward drift of the Nairobi River had to be forded. Then, wearied out, we soon settled down for another night under canvas.

We were now on the confines of civilization. We did not, however, enter the town of Nairobi, but, passing by the outskirts, made our way out

to Kabete, which we reached in the afternoon, thankful indeed to have arrived in safety at our destination.

. . .

Here I must pause to pass over the two years spent at this station—years which had their special trials and difficulties, filled with events which, however, cannot be of any special interest to my readers. Carrying on the work of our predecessor, studying the difficult Kikuyu language, visiting the native villages around, and (on my husband's part) dispensary practice amongst the sick and suffering, the months sped on, and the time drew near, so long eagerly anticipated, of pioneering in the heart of Kenia and opening a medical mission there. During our long stay at Kabete, Dr. Crawford took two trips to the district beyond Fort Hall, on the second occasion conducting a European builder to the site which had been chosen by the Bishop. A few months later (Dec. 3, 1906) we were able to bid farewell to Kabete and start out to take possession of our new Kenia station.

By this time a new road had been made between Nairobi and Fort Hall, and fine stone bridges were in course of construction at a point where the Thika and Chania Rivers converge. Just below the bridges are two magnificent waterfalls, one with a drop of about one hundred feet, and the air is filled with the roar of the tumbling waters and with the rainbow-tinted spray The Chania Falls are quite a miniature Niagara

CHAPTER VII

Opening of the Kenia Medical Mission

THE site selected for the medical mission was a beautiful one, with a fine view of Mt. Kenia on the north and Mt. Kinangop on the west, whilst to the south-east we could look away over the Athi plains to Mt. Donyo Sabuk. About six miles westward was the C.M.S. station, Weithaga, where we had previously lived, and which is quite 300 feet higher than our own site. Fort Hall lies due east of Kahuhia (the native name for our district by which the station was afterwards known) at a distance of about nine miles by road. This road, which is scarcely more than a pathway, was cut through by the paramount chief Karuri to connect his village with the Fort. Although but few native huts can be distinguished from the medical mission hill, the population is in reality very numerous, the Kikuyu villages being nearly all hidden away in banana groves and thickets.

As we approached our station after our long *safari* of nearly eighty miles, many of the natives rushed out into the road to welcome us. We found

the mission house very far from completion and we had to take up our abode in a tiny store room (eight feet by ten) a few feet from the main building. This little room was destitute of any window, so darkness reigned supreme when the door was shut. Yet if we ventured to open it ever so little there was always a crowd of dusky forms grouped outside with gleaming black eyes, watching every movement. Curiosity brought the people about us in hundreds those first days, and they would sit amongst the débris of the building operations, apparently fascinated by all that the white people did and said. They were specially pleased to find that we could talk their language, though but imperfectly. Our first Sunday service was held on the unfinished verandah of the house amid a medley of building materials. Sometimes I would draw little groups of women and girls into one of the damp and empty rooms, endeavouring to make them understand the first outlines of the message we had come to bring them, or teaching them a verse of a Kikuyu hymn. Rank weeds and bushes covered the hill-top, and for many weeks a gang of men and boys were at work clearing them away. Grass and clover seemed to be only waiting to spring up and spread wherever they had a chance, so it was not very long before we had a nice green slope all down to the road, with a wide path cut round in a semicircle.

The Doctor lost no time in staking out his dispensary. Poles were erected in the ground two

feet apart along the line drawn for the walls, and on the top of these other poles were laid horizontally. Then several taller posts were set up across the middle of the square to support the ridge pole, and from this the other timbers of the roof descended to the horizontal poles of the wall. The framework of the roof was then completed by sticks being fastened from pole to pole, about three inches apart, by means of strips of wild ramie fibre. Meanwhile quantities of banana bark had been brought by the women and children for thatching the roof. Each strip of this useful commodity is threaded through the sticks of the roof, the ends being pulled equal, and so a very good strong thatch is made, which has a particularly neat appearance from the inside if the sticks have been tied on evenly. The walls were now wattled in with reeds and thickly plastered with mud. Where windows were required the mud was omitted, and a piece of unbleached cotton was stretched across the aperture. When all was finished some boxes were broken up, and the Doctor made some quite presentable-looking shelves on which to display his bottles.

Just three weeks after our arrival the opening service was held. This was on Christmas Eve, and as a large native dance was going on close by we had not much difficulty in getting an audience of six or seven hundred savages together. A very wild, uproarious set they were, and when my husband intimated that he wanted me to have the privilege of addressing them I felt rather like running

away ! But the next minute I was mounted upon a packing-case trying to make myself heard. Taken completely by surprise they quieted down and listened fairly well while I told them why we had come, impressing upon them that while they would now find plenty of medicine to help their bodily infirmities, we had also brought another kind of *muthaiga*, the Word of God, which could heal their souls' sickness too.

No sooner was the dispensary opened than patients began coming; some forty or fifty at the beginning, but by the end of the first month the number had risen to between one hundred and one hundred and fifty. A large verandah was added to the dispensary, and under it the patients were gathered to hear a Gospel message day by day. We also held the Sunday services there for several weeks until a hospital chapel, built in the same way as the dispensary, viz., of wattle and daub, was completed. The congregation, numbering two to three hundred, was as wild a one as could well be found. The men often would rush in, forgetting to leave their spears and knobkerries outside, and all eager for a front seat ! The women were chattering to each other as they pushed their way in, many of them with babies slung on their backs. Then came a crowd of boys and girls with scarcely a shred of covering, but full of life and merriment, jumping over the rough benches and filling up all corners. But every Sunday found them a little more amenable to order, and the strains of the baby organ always

Chief Karuri's Village, showing his European House

Kahuhia School

Dr. Crawford and Patients, Kahuhia

helped to quiet them down. On Sunday afternoons we would visit the neighbouring villages on foot, sometimes holding services at two or three homesteads in the course of our walk, and always followed by a troop of boys besides our own native helpers and servants.

The Sunday evening Bible class brought a happy day of service to a close. For this all who lived on the station were gathered together, and very soon outsiders began attending also. From the time that the mission house was finished and we were able to move into it we used the little dining-room for this and other classes, and frequently it would be so tightly packed that boys would be crowded together even under the table ! When the Bible lesson had ended in an earnest appeal, those whose hearts were touched were invited to remain behind for a personal talk and prayer. Our cook, Mohea, was one of the first to respond. He had entered our employ as a raw Heathen about a year and a half before we opened the Kahuhia work, and had learnt to read at Kabete. Together with a young consumptive patient who had also been under instruction at the latter station, he stood up one Sunday morning to confess his faith in his newly-found Saviour. Mashamba, the consumptive boy, only lived a month after this happy event. But as he became weaker and weaker his faith grew brighter. Just before the end he asked for baptism, which could not be denied him under the circumstances. We laid the poor, wasted little body to rest on the

hillside near the station; and as one of our C.M.S. clergy was staying at Weithaga he kindly came over and read the funeral service.

About this time two other young men were admitted as inquirers; one of these was Gathu, who had been our water boy more than two years before at Weithaga. He re-entered our employ almost as soon as we returned to the neighbourhood, and proved so clever and trustworthy that Dr. Crawford trained him for a medical assistant. The other one was Gachanja, who after we left Kahuhia became the Rev. Douglas Hooper's right-hand man. Several others also came forward and publicly confessed Christ, declaring at the same time their determination to sever themselves from all the evil customs of the tribe. An inquirers' class, therefore, had to be instituted, in which it was the constant aim to impress upon its members what following the Lord Jesus Christ really involved. Later on, a Saturday evening prayer meeting was started, and it was most cheering to hear the voices of the young converts raised in prayer.

Meanwhile the day school had been opened, and all who wished were urged to learn to read the Book of God for themselves. By a quick system my scholars were actually beginning to read in the tentative Gospel of St. John (which was all we had in the Kikuyu language at that time) at the end of three months, of course only slowly spelling out the words. After another month or more, progress became still more rapid, and very soon they were

able to read this portion of the Scriptures with fluency. We then began teaching them Ki-Swahili; this is the *lingua franca* of East Africa, and the whole Bible, as well as many other religious books, have been translated into it. It becomes therefore a natural vehicle for presenting our adherents with the Word of God. Fortunately we had picked up some Swahili during a five months' sojourn at the coast when we first entered the country, and the slight knowledge gained then came in exceedingly useful for the school work.

A daily school service was inaugurated, when a Bible lesson was given, and a very simple Catechism, much used in mission stations in India (which I had translated into Kikuyu), was ground into the scholars. They were also taught to recite the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the General Confession, the Ten Commandments, and several passages of Scripture. All the in-patients were expected to attend this service, unless too seriously ill to do so. Having no native teacher, and being handicapped with frequent illness, it was not without considerable difficulty that we carried on the school. When laid up for a week or so at a time I would send for a few of the brightest scholars, and give them a lesson as they stood at my bedside, and then send them away to pass on what they had learnt to others.

As months flew on we could not but notice the change that was taking place in those who were thus regularly under instruction. Seldom were

any of the scholars absent from Bible classes, services and prayer meetings, and the result was a turning away from the degrading customs and enslaving superstitions of their people, and a gradual acceptation of the precious truths which alone could make them wise unto salvation. By the end of the first year of our work amongst them quite a number had expressed a desire to follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

From the first the work amongst the Kikuyu women was a special source of interest. They are all jealously guarded by their men-folk, who fear and resent any influence other than their own being brought to bear upon them. The worker therefore who would succeed is compelled to go forward very slowly and tactfully.

About three miles from Kahuhia is a bare hill-top which every fourth day is the scene of an enormous native market, when the appearance from a distance is as if a swarm of locusts had settled down upon the hill. From one to two thousand people are gathered together on these occasions, and the amount of bargaining and haggling is absolutely bewildering! All kinds of native produce are brought to the market for sale or exchange. Loads of firewood, maize and other grains, bananas, yams, sugar cane, native beer, pottery, calabashes, gourds, *uchuru* (a favourite kind of gruel), *therega* (a red earth for smearing their bodies), castor oil beans, spears, knives and native ornaments of brass, iron and beadwork, several varieties of

Pupil Teachers at Kahuhia School

beans, native potash (used as a substitute for salt), also goat and sheep skins,—these and other things may all be found at this strange emporium.

Quite early in the morning we used to watch a steady stream of women passing our station, all more or less heavily laden as they trudged to market. It occurred to me that by having the baby organ carried down to the roadside between one and two o'clock, when the women were returning to their homes, I might attract them by singing some Kikuyu hymns, and thus induce them to listen to the Old, Old Story. It seemed to answer very well, and week by week, whenever I was able, I held my roadside meeting. Full of astonishment and curiosity at such unwonted proceedings, the women would throw down their loads and listen for a while; but frequently just at the point when their attention seemed to be secured they would pick up their bundles again, and with noisy chatter and laughter hurry off down the road. After some months it was deemed advisable to hold a women's meeting in the school-house instead of in the open air. By this time many of the women and girls from the neighbouring villages began to attend, and the work was most encouraging. When the meeting was over a crowd of them would conduct me back to the house, the little girls being specially friendly and always trying to get hold of my hand and run by my side. The great delight of all was to be allowed to enter the sitting-room and look at the pictures and

photographs which adorned the walls and tables. But they could only be admitted in relays of a few at a time. The musical box would then be set going, its sweet strains filling them with a sense of mystery and amazement. Some declared that there was an animal in the box; others said, 'No! It is an *ngoma* (spirit)!'

Strange to say, the most absorbing object in the room was a small white marble bust of the late Prince Consort which came from my old home. They were always half terrified of it, and would keep running away, and then rushing back again whenever it was shown to them. I tried to explain who it was, and would end up by telling them that the Prince was a very good man as well as a great one, and that he loved God very much. After this they always inquired for the 'Man of God,' and when crowding on the verandah would shout, 'Bring out the man of God,' to our intense amusement. So a very happy relationship with the women was established, and often after the Sunday morning service two or three hundred of them would press around me, all wanting a special and individual greeting.

With the object of still further increasing my influence amongst them we started a mat industry. The Kikuyu women and girls are very clever at weaving bags of all sizes in which they carry their native produce. Having bought a quantity of native string we proceeded to dye it different colours. Then having already learnt the native

stitch I experimented in utilizing it for weaving mats instead of the stereotyped native bag, and we soon discovered that the result would be very pretty, while at the same time the mats would be really strong and serviceable. The women readily took to the work, and all went merrily for a time. But, alas! they needed such close supervision that I found it would absorb all my time to the exclusion of everything else. When my back was turned they played all sorts of tricks on me, even cutting the long warp threads in order to finish their task the sooner! The weaving was slow and laborious, and we very soon found it would be impossible to make it pay; so very reluctantly I had to relinquish the project. We sent a few samples to some heads of Government departments, however, and considerable interest was aroused, but there, unfortunately, it had to end.

Meanwhile the medical work was making considerable headway, and many temporary huts had been put up for the accommodation of in-patients, who were beginning to greatly appreciate the skill and care bestowed upon them. Quite a number of operations were performed, which filled the natives with astonishment, especially when chloroform was employed. '*Gitari* kills people, then brings them to life again!' was again and again the wondering exclamation. Patients who remained for any length of time were urged to attend the school whenever it was at all possible. The station became a sort of Cave of Adullam,

where those who were in distress, or were despised on account of physical infirmity, sought a refuge. Among these was a lad whose leg had been bitten off by a hyæna. Another had suffered the amputation of an arm owing to a rock falling on him while hunting for rock rabbits. He was a poor diseased little fellow when he first came to us, from whom the other boys shrank away, but under the Doctor's care he became greatly improved. After some months he joined the inquirers' class.

CHAPTER VIII

The Poisoners Defeated

WE were often grieved at the way in which chiefs oppressed their people, always enriching themselves at their expense. One such case of extortion my husband felt he could only report to the officials at Fort Hall. Compensation to the various owners of land now occupied by the medical mission had been paid over in the presence of a Government officer, the local chief Kabuga receiving a special present in money for the help he had given in the matter. Not content with this, however, he went round to the elders who had received payment, and insisted that each of them should hand over one rupee (1s. 4d.) to him.

The case was tried by the District Commissioner, with the result that chief Kabuga was proved guilty, and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. We really felt sorry for the poor man, as it was certainly a very severe lesson for him. A council of elders was held, and one of their number, a man named Ndangara, was chosen as Kabuga's successor. Though not a strong character, he was outwardly

friendly to our work, and for a time we were free from opposition. A year and a half later, when we were on our furlough in Canada, the sad news reached us that Ndangara had been poisoned. Kabuga had, of course, been back at his village again for some time, and it was the general opinion in the neighbourhood that he was the culprit, although at the trial, owing to insufficiency of evidence, it could not be proved. So strong was the feeling in the matter, that when Ndangara's brother was appointed to the chieftainship, Kabuga was warned by the people that if their new chief was poisoned they would take the law into their own hands and Kabuga's own life would pay the penalty !

Many were the cases of poisoning which came before our notice, but some of them were reported too late for effective aid to be rendered. It seems to be considered a satisfactory way of getting rid of an enemy. Sometimes the dastardly deed is perpetrated out of jealousy, or from the desire to acquire the victim's cattle or goats. Around the district of Kahuhia, as well as some other parts of the Kikuyu country, this secret poisoning is very much practised, and there is one particular clan of the tribe, called the Athaga, some of the male members of which are known to be experts in this horrible custom, who will remove any objectionable person for a consideration ! During our stay at Kahuhia several elders were dispatched by the hand of the assassin. The occasion chosen

is often that of a beer-drink, when the poisoner awaits his opportunity, and when his victim is sufficiently under the influence of drink he stealthily inserts some of his deadly drug into the drinking horn. Another method is to mix poison with the food.

There are several kinds of poison, the most virulent being obtained from the Akamba. It is said to be extracted from the fangs of a very poisonous snake, and after being boiled up with the sap of a particular kind of tree, it is dried and kept ready for use. Poison is also obtained from some varieties of strychnos and euphorbia trees. Yet another kind is found in the form of formic acid, which is extracted from red ants; but this last is only used for arrows, as far as we can ascertain.

One afternoon Dr. Crawford happened to be told that there was a victim of poisoning at one of the neighbouring villages. Hurrying to the place with his medical assistant he found a young man lying in a most serious condition and completely unconscious. His brother, who appeared to be taking care of him, strongly opposed his being conveyed to the mission station, but finally promised to bring him himself on condition that he might be allowed to remain with him. However, instead of bringing him into hospital he put him out into the thicket to die, and the news was brought to the Doctor early next morning. In a very short time he was on the spot, and found that notwithstanding the terrible night of exposure

life was not quite extinct. The man was at once removed to a hospital hut. His brother seemed determined to follow, and being such a near relative my husband did not like to refuse. Though the patient was already cold and stiff there soon appeared to be some slight response to the treatment; he continued gradually to improve, and after several days of the most watchful care we rejoiced to find a partial return to consciousness. We left him in his brother's care as usual for the night, and he promised to carry out all instructions. What then was our surprise and distress when we were informed next morning that he had passed away. The brother was already hurrying away with the body! On thinking it over afterwards we could not help suspecting foul play, and the more so when we heard that the poor fellow who had been so cruelly done to death was the possessor of six cows which his brother would inherit!

Some time after this, on one of our visits to the villages the Doctor discovered a young man lying unconscious and almost at the point of death as the result of poisoning, and we were told that he had already been in this condition for quite a week. Though so far gone that there appeared to be little hope of saving him, my husband sent for the hospital stretcher and had him carried to the station. Fearing that another dose of the deadly drug might be secretly administered if he began to revive, Dr. Crawford had a tent pitched on the lawn at the back of our house, so that no one could

approach the sick man without our seeing him, and here the rigid and inanimate form was laid. We tended him entirely ourselves, and every two hours we would try to force a teaspoonful of nourishment between the clenched teeth. The treatment, which was chiefly of a hypodermic character, seemed to be gradually having effect, and on the third day there were signs of returning consciousness. The mind, however, seemed to be completely obscured, and he had entirely lost the use of his limbs. Day by day, nevertheless, witnessed some slight improvement, by God's blessing, and after two months of careful treatment we had the joy of seeing poor Ngwari able to walk home cured. 'You must be a god and not a man at all!' was chief Karuri's exclamation, when visiting the station about this time. No one, he assured the Doctor, had ever been able to overcome the deadly native poison in this way before. But promptly came the answer that the Doctor himself could have done nothing unless God had given him the wisdom. Therefore it was to Him alone the praise should be given. We have lately heard that Ngwari is under Christian instruction and that he is attending the Kahuhia school.

One other poisoning case amongst many may be mentioned; that of a young man named Kinyanjui, who had been on *safari* beyond the Tana River in the employ of a European. He arrived at our station in a very emaciated condition but was rapidly improving under treatment, when suddenly

he was seized by a terrible illness, the symptoms plainly indicating poison. Being on the spot the Doctor quickly had the case in hand, and very fervently we prayed that the means might prove efficacious. Day by day we watched over the unfortunate boy until we had the great satisfaction of seeing him come round, but as in the case of Ngwari the reason was beclouded and the limbs paralyzed for several weeks, though he eventually made a good recovery. One evening our house boys and medical assistants were sitting as usual round a fire in their hut, cooking their supper, when a stranger dropped in and squatted down with the rest, and extended his hands to the blaze as if to warm them. He was just about to drop something stealthily into the cooking-pot when he was discovered, and a scene of great excitement ensued. During the boys' efforts to capture him he was seen to throw something into the flames. The case was tried before the local chief and the culprit was soundly thrashed.

The Doctor had many calls to go to the assistance of Europeans as well as natives, sometimes at a great distance and in the middle of the night. The most frequent of these calls were to Fort Hall in the absence of the Government doctor, or for a consultation with him over some unusually serious case. On one occasion a settler living on the plains was attacked and robbed by natives, and left for dead. After the robbers had departed he somewhat revived and was just able to crawl to the Fort, where

the treatment he received was the means of his ultimate recovery. Another time a planter was terribly mauled by a lion, and my husband was sent for to help the Government doctor. Scarcely was he out of danger than one of the officials was brought to the Fort in a most critical condition owing to the attack of a lion while hunting, and again the medical missionary's services were required in consultation. One evening a summons came from a new Africa Inland Mission station on the borders of the bamboo forest, near Mt. Kinangop, where the missionary's wife lay ill. Hastily packing up what he deemed might be necessary, the Doctor started off with his boy. Many ranges of hills, deep ravines and swiftly-flowing rivers intervened between the two stations, and nearly all night he struggled on, though scarcely able to see the pathway. To have the privilege of relieving pain and anxiety was sufficient reward for the arduous journey, which took him nine hours to accomplish.

Perhaps one of the cases which caused us most thankfulness was that of a young Englishman who had become enslaved to the morphine habit. Greatly wishing to escape from this awful bondage he came to Dr. Crawford and planted his tent on our hill. The fight was a stiff one and at times the patient was almost in despair, but the Doctor was bent on victory, and encouraged him to bravely persevere through all the physical suffering which is unavoidable in such a case. My husband en-

deavoured to point him to the Great Physician as the One Who alone could give him complete deliverance, and after some months of treatment, in response to many prayers, we had the joy of seeing our patient entirely cured.

CHAPTER IX

On Safari

THE paramount chief, Karuri, had often expressed a wish that we would pay him a visit, so in the month of July, 1907, we arranged a tour that would include his ' Great Place ' as well as the different C.M.S. sites (most of which are, alas ! still unoccupied). To prepare for an itineration of several weeks in a country like this, so far from civilized life, is no small matter ! But at last the ' chop ' boxes were filled, the camp beds tucked away into the *safari* bags, trunks packed, tents folded, medical boxes crowded with bandages and drugs, and everything ready for a start. Now the half-naked porters are to be seen fixing their rough strips of hide on to their loads, then sitting on the ground to pick them up, and rising with the box or bundle suspended on the back by means of the leather strap which passes over the crown of the head. In this way the weight is well balanced between the back and the head ; so, although they stoop beneath their burdens, off they go merrily enough, and of course in single file ! Farewells are

said, the mission station is left behind, and the whole cavalcade winds its way down to the river, the Doctor and myself bringing up the rear, he on his large white mule, and I in a hammock. Slightly higher than many of the hills just ahead of us rises a cone-shaped eminence on which trees and buildings can be plainly distinguished. In a little over an hour and a half we are ascending its slopes and greeting Mr. McGregor, who has come out to meet us and welcome us to his station. There is no longer a bare hill-top as when we resided here two years and a half ago, for tall eucalyptus and graceful wattle trees now line the walks and lend a grateful shade. There is also a large church built of sun-dried bricks, where we attended service that evening, and again the following morning before setting out.

Mr. McGregor accompanied us a little way along our road, which led through one of the loveliest parts of the country with Mt. Kinangop in the blue background. Ascending steadily for the most part all the way, we gazed down into deep and fertile valleys where the Mathioya and its tributaries could be seen threading their way. Banana plantations disappeared as the altitude increased, and we noticed that Indian corn, so prolific in our own district, became poor and stunted. But beautiful forests enhanced the scenery, and the natives seemed to be well provided with yams, sweet potatoes and a root called *nduma*, a species of arum lily, all of which they cultivate on the sheltered sides

of the hills as well as in the vales below. In this part of the Province of Kenia the road is seldom ever level for a quarter of a mile at a time, and the traveller is confronted with a perpetual succession of hills.

Early in the afternoon we turned off the main road and followed a native footpath. We now had steeper heights to climb, and the air became extremely bracing. Eventually we emerged on to the summit of a lofty ridge about 8,000 feet high, where in clear weather both the great mountains of East Africa may be distinguished. A profusion of bracken in varying tints of green and gold and bronze stretched before us like a carpet; and tree ferns innumerable spread their graceful fronds high above our heads. Amid such surroundings we came suddenly upon a little house of mud and sticks, and knew that we had reached a C.M.S. site called Keruri, which Mr. McGregor works as an out-station. A thickly-falling mist made us glad to find a shelter and quickly kindle a fire, which had to be kept going continually on account of the cold.

The next day we were still enveloped in clouds, and the rawness of the atmosphere no doubt kept the natives in their villages, as very few came to see us, although my husband found some sick people requiring his ministrations. Sunday followed, and still a drenching mist enwrapped the hills. We had given out that there would be a service, but our patience was nearly exhausted before any one

came. At length a group of men and girls arrived from the neighbouring homesteads, and our porters and boys helped to swell the congregation.

In the evening, when we were sitting reading by the light of our camp lanterns, there was a call at our door, and on going out we found a boy of about seventeen years of age in great distress, with blood streaming from his ear, and trembling violently. He sobbed out that he had been beaten because of the Word of God. The men of his village were very angry at our coming there, and said that we came to deceive the people with our lies. Then the boy, who had learnt to read at this little school-house in the mountains, stood up and said it was not so, but that the Word of God was good, and that we His servants did not tell lies. Upon this a young warrior picked up a burning firebrand and belaboured him with it. His own mother also beat him, so that he fled in terror. We sought to comfort the poor fellow, assuring him that God would bless him for suffering for His sake, and that he must rejoice and not be afraid. Then we committed him to our medical assistants' care for the night, and the next morning we found him almost recovered from his beating and looking more cheerful.

Our caravan was now on the move again, and all rejoicing to escape from such a cold and cheerless camp. By a sharp winding defile we gradually left the cloud-capped mountain top, threading our way through a forest of tree ferns,

Camp in Karuri's Village

The Four Paramount Chiefs in the Cis-Tana Country
Karuri is the second from the left

Medical Itineration: Service in Camp

bamboos and other beautiful trees. In one place a veteran of the forest had half fallen across the path, forming a natural arch, which was completely mantled with ferns and begonias. The road now became so terribly precipitous that the mule fairly slipped down on her haunches, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that my dusky bearers could retain their footing. Into the depths of a lovely valley we at last descended, and found ourselves on the banks of the River Tuso. The next minute I was being borne across the most impossible-looking rocks, then over a long, rough pole which did duty for a bridge; and after a short, steep climb on the other side a sudden turn of the road brought us into the paramount chief's village.

No more interesting spot than this can be found in this wonderful country. To us it seemed the oddest mixture of barbarism and civilization. The site is like some English park, with groups of tall, shady trees, and the greenest of pasture where herds of goats were browsing. Karuri's own house and stable are solidly built of stone in European fashion, but in close vicinity native huts and granaries are crowded together. As the old man possesses about seventy wives, it may be imagined what a large village it is! Women and children soon emerged to stare at the intruders. The chief himself was away from home, but as he had heard that we were intending to pay him a visit, he left word for two sheep to

be presented to us, and food and firewood for our men. Our tents were pitched on the grass outside the village, and sick folk of all ages came to seek the Doctor's aid.

In the morning (July 30) we strolled into the village, and some of the chief's sons unlocked the house and showed us over it. The walls are nicely whitewashed and the floor laid with cement, and there is even an attempt at furniture, as we noticed a wooden bedstead, two tables, a bench, several chairs, a lantern and a lamp. On the walls hung a large photograph of Karuri himself, and two pictorial advertisements of English biscuits and lime juice! Opening a door which led into another room the boys pointed out a huge box which they said was full of rupees, and a trap door in the floor leading to a hoard of ivory. Both treasures were secured by very strong locks. Outside the house is a place of heathen sacrifice, and a repulsive-looking vulture hovers around, seeming to mount guard over the village!

About sundown we heard the cry, 'The chief is coming!' and presently men began arriving with his loads, which included a European tent and chair. Then Karuri appeared, riding his white mule, and dressed in a suit of khaki, and white helmet. He dismounted to greet us before entering his village, and we entertained him with cocoa and cake under the awning outside our tent. He came round again in the morning to wish us good-

bye, this time looking more regal in a robe of skins embroidered with white beads.

At noon (July 31) we arrived at Njumvi, another C.M.S. site. Here a large native market is held every fourth day, and we pitched our tent in full view of the market place, which next day was quite black with its moving mass of human beings, all busily engaged in driving bargains and exchanging their produce. Of course we were the objects of great curiosity, and the people thronged around us. Sick people came in hundreds to the Doctor, and large numbers attended our services, listening very quietly while we spoke to them of the Saviour's love in dying to save them, and of the nearness of His coming again. A lantern service was a great attraction. We tarried five days at this centre.

At a distance of about two hours from Njumvi is the village of a chief, named Mungi. Here we only intended to rest for half an hour by the roadside, but the chief came out to welcome us, and implored us to encamp for the night that his sick people might be attended to; so we yielded to his importunity, and my husband and his assistants soon had as much as they could do. We also had a lantern service in the evening.

Our next camping place was three hours' journey from Mungi's, in a north-easterly direction, where a chief, named Wagura, holds sway. We pitched our tent on mission premises under a fine old tree, and the people finding out that the *Athungu*

had arrived, our camp soon witnessed a lively scene. About twenty girls, all highly decorated with beads and red clay, came and sang and danced in our honour, and elders and warriors also crowded around. Then came Wagura himself, his head and shoulders simply smothered in red clay and grease. One of his followers carried his chair, on which he sat with great dignity while conversing with us! He was glad to have his sick people tended, and presented us with a sheep in token of his good will. The next afternoon we visited his village, which is strongly enclosed within three successive stockade fences. Inside the third fence are the huts of his wives.

Here we found an enormous crowd of savages engaged in building a large new hut for the chief. The women were on the roof as thick as bees! First of all they had laid a quantity of bracken fern, over which they were spreading banana leaves, while huge bundles of grass lay around ready for the final thatching. What an ovation we received! The women and girls simply swarmed around me, all wanting to shake hands. They laughed and shouted and screamed and danced, until the babel was deafening and bewildering. Before leaving we invited them all to a lantern service, but for some reason or other the chief kept them away.

August 8 found us at the Government Fort Nyeri after a heavy journey of three and a half hours over the steepest of hills. The District

Commissioner kindly invited us to lunch while our men were arranging our camp. A cold drizzling rain made it almost impossible to keep warm at night, yet we were only thirty miles from the equator! Very glad indeed we were to be on the move again next morning.

The following day we pitched our tent, for the last time, in the vicinity of a chief's village, and close to another C.M.S. site. Patients and others soon gathered round, and we spent a very happy Sunday amongst them (Aug. 11), many no doubt hearing the Old, Old Story for the first time.

On Monday morning (Aug. 12) we started for our station at 7 o'clock. There were enormous hills to climb and descend, and twice the Mathioya River had to be crossed by bridges which it makes one almost tremble to think of even now! A single log, supported by the branches of some accommodating tree on the bank usually spans the stream, and in some instances at a considerable height above it. And when this log is very uneven and slanting, yet many feet in length, or roughly joined to another log that comes to meet it, the feeling of insecurity with which one traverses it may be imagined! The way in which my bearers bore me over many such rough suspension bridges during our trip was perfectly marvellous, but the worst and longest one, spanning the Mathioya, they refused to attempt with me in the hammock. So there was nothing to be done but to climb up into the tree which bent over the river, and then

creep carefully along the log, step by step, with the help of our two medical assistants, until the friendly arms of the tree on the opposite bank offered their support, and another very tortuous beam led down to *terra firma*! It occurred to me that any missionaries intended for itinerating work in Kenia would do well to have a few lessons in tight-rope walking as part of their home preparation! Men and women and children flocked out from the villages to see us pass, and then ran along by our side, full of excitement. It is scarcely likely that any European had ever passed that way before.

At length we reached our own hill, and many were the greetings that cheered us from our friendly neighbours, schoolboys and house-servants left in charge. Everywhere during our *safari* we were struck with the greatness of the opportunity for evangelistic work. Thousands and thousands of these poor savages are 'as sheep having no shepherd,' and yet the Good Shepherd is yearning over them, and would fain send His messengers far and wide over this beautiful Kikuyu country to bring them into His fold.

CHAPTER X

The last Year at Kahuhia

OUR second year of residence at Kahuhia was one of progress all along the line, but there were seasons of intense difficulty and opposition to be passed through. Chiefs and medicine men began to plot against us. The medical mission was becoming a force to be reckoned with, and many of the young people were making a stand and refusing to participate in certain evil tribal customs, which were as the laws of the Medes and Persians to the Kikuyu elders. Pupils were therefore withdrawn from the school and sent far away in search of work, until we were left with an attendance of only ten or twelve. Besides this there was some disaffection within our ranks, which caused us much trouble for several weeks, and everything seemed at a low ebb. If only the missionary is driven to prayer and waiting upon God such an experience is fraught with nothing but blessing.

Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low and keep me there.

Those who had been causing trouble were two young men who had been partially trained as medical assistants, and who had even asked to be prepared for baptism. They had also been very useful as pupil teachers in the school. The climax was reached when they both gave notice and immediately left the work, drawing several others away with them. But from that time the tide began to turn, and the attendance at the school gradually rose again until a few months later we had over eighty scholars. Nine or ten of the earlier pupils had to be trained to instruct the others to replace those who had left. These were now able to read the Swahili New Testament, and some of the brightest had been taught to give short Bible lessons in school.

Scarcely a week passed without one or two coming forward to declare their faith in Christ, and desiring to join the inquirers' class. A catechumens' class was also formed for those who had given some evidence of a change of life and wished to be baptized. We did not neglect to impress upon our young converts the duty and privilege of giving of their substance to the Lord's work. The first collection was made one Sunday evening, and great was our joy to see the pice [1] pouring into the plate as it was passed around. After this we had a monthly offering, our adherents always

[1] A pice was equivalent to a farthing, sixty-four making a rupee. The currency has since been changed to 100 cents to the rupee, and the pice have been called in.

responding cheerfully, although the greater number of them did not earn more than a few pice a week.

At the Sunday evening class the presence and power of God were often very manifest, and frequently several would remain behind for a personal talk and prayer, telling us that they desired to become Christians. The Sunday congregation had long crowded out the little school-house, and it became imperative to build a large hospital chapel, capable of seating three hundred and fifty people. To this a nice airy school-room was added, and it was with great delight that we took possession of the new premises on their completion. These buildings were of sun-dried brick, and, being neatly finished and whitewashed inside and out, were a vast improvement on what had gone before. Fully four hundred people packed in for the opening Sunday service, while many who were unable to effect an entrance contented themselves with blocking the doorways and leaning in through the windows !

It now became necessary to erect some large hospital wards, providing beds for some forty in-patients. These wards were also built of sun-dried brick, and the beds were made after the Swahili fashion, with a simple wooden framework, and a crosswise lacing of plaited grass rope, on which grass mats were laid. Patients were now coming from great distances, and the attendance at the dispensary often numbered from two hundred to two hundred and fifty a day.

The work amongst the women was developing

wonderfully, and it was not unusual to find one hundred or even one hundred and fifty gathered together for their own special weekly meeting. Many of the women and girls from the neighbouring villages began quite spontaneously to attend also the evening Bible classes and prayer meetings, sometimes quite forty or fifty flocking in together. In this land where the weaker sex are often so difficult to reach, on account of the restrictions by which they are bound, this was indeed a sight to gladden our hearts. Sometimes as we sat together on the verandah of our house after the class had been dismissed, watching the silvery moonlight transforming our pretty garden into a veritable fairyland, we would talk together of all God's wonderful goodness in allowing us to see some signs of the coming of His Kingdom, and then my husband would say, 'It cannot be because of anything in us, but because so many of God's people are praying for us far away in the Homelands.'

I must not forget to mention the industrial side of the work. We felt very strongly that to develop the African along right lines he must be taught to work with his hands, while at the same time learning to read and write. For this reason, although numbers of boys now lived on the station, no money was ever paid out to them for their support, but only for actual work accomplished. On this account we endeavoured to find employment for as many as possible. Brick-making

house-building, rough carpentering and gardening, besides the mat industry, kept a large number of men, women and boys constantly busy for many hours a day. Returning from school each morning I was generally followed by a crowd of lads begging for work; and two or three tiny mites of four or five years of age would press up to me, flourishing their little cultivating knives aloft, and crying lustily, '*Hee kawera! hee kawera!*' (Give me a little bit of work!). The paramount chief, Karuri, several times paid us a visit, and was always greatly interested in all that he saw.

During the years 1907 and 1908 three caravan journeys were undertaken, one of which has been described at length in the previous chapter. A short *safari* was made to a district under a chief named Kahuria, a few hours' journey from our station. About one hundred and fifty people were assembled for a Sunday service, and medicines were freely dispensed, but we have seldom been amongst a more unfriendly set of natives.

Later on my husband and his brother (the Rev. E. W. Crawford) went together on a three weeks' tour with the object of choosing new sites for the C.M.S. in the almost unknown trans-Tana country, a work which had been entrusted to them by the Bishop and the local governing body. Three sites chosen during that journey, as the result of many negotiations with chiefs and a great deal of cross-country travelling, are at the time of writing all occupied as mission stations—Kabare,

Embu and Muitiro. On the return *safari* they met with the unpleasant experience of being charged by two rhinoceroses not far from Fort Embu, and having no firearms with them, they only escaped by hastily climbing up into some trees by the roadside.

As the year drew to a close we began to make preparations for leaving on furlough, and the Rev. and Mrs. Douglas Hooper arrived in the middle of December, having been appointed to carry on the work during our absence. Christmas with its glad associations was upon us, and we endeavoured to make it a day of thanksgiving and rejoicing. Our neighbours poured in to the Christmas service, and learnt, we trust, something of its sacred lessons. Many little gifts were dispensed, and the slaughter of a sheep provided an ample feast for all on the station. Amongst the presents were a number of dolls sent by friends in England. These proved a source of great delight, not so much to the little girls (who were afraid of them!) as to the boys and warriors, who were each so keen to possess one that it was impossible to satisfy them all with the very limited number at our disposal.

Boxing Day was devoted to sports and games for our young people, and the whole community assembled on the hill to watch the fun. Hurling spears at a target provided keen excitement for the young men, and 'pick-a-back' and sack races created a great deal of merriment. But perhaps

the three-legged races were the most popular, and in these the women begged to be allowed to join.

A few weeks later came a still more interesting occasion, the baptism of our first converts. Only eight of the catechumens were considered sufficiently advanced for this important step. They had all been under instruction for about two years, and some of them even longer. We had decided that to have them baptized by immersion would be a more impressive object lesson to the Heathen, and to the candidates themselves. The beautiful similitude in baptism of death to the old life of sin, and the rising again to a new life in Christ, had of course been carefully explained, but we realized that it was the Holy Spirit alone Who could make it a reality in each individual life. The Rev. E. W. Crawford performed the ceremony, which took place at the little river which flows at the foot of the steep hill below the mission station. The banks were lined with hundreds of natives, drawn together no doubt by curiosity, and all the adherents of our church and school were also present. Silence fell upon the congregation as one by one the candidates stepped down into the stream, where my brother-in-law, standing in his surplice, received and immersed them. At the close of the service, clad in clean white garments, they formed into a procession to return to the station.

Much sorrowful regret was expressed over our departure. The women crowded around us saying,

'What shall we do when our father and mother are gone?' And indeed the work had beeome so dear to our own hearts that it was diffieult to tear ourselves away. Little did we think that we should never return to labour at Kahuhia again, yet so it was ordained!

PART III

Embu

'A little Sanctuary' art Thou to me,
Amongst the Heathen where I dwell with Thee;
Beneath Thy shadow, folded 'neath Thy wing,
In deep content my song of praise I sing.

'A little Sanctuary' art Thou to me—
No fabled shrine, but deep Reality!
Thou said'st it should be so when at Thy call
I rose and followed, gladly leaving all.

'A little Sanctuary' art Thou to me!
All joyfully I pitch my tent *with Thee*,
Or ready still to journey at Thy Word—
'In thee' I 'live and move,' most blessed Lord.

CHAPTER XI

Beyond the Tana River

ON our return from furlough in 1910, it was arranged that the Rev. and Mrs. Douglas Hooper should continue our work at Kahuhia, the latter being a qualified medical woman, and that we should be sent to the entirely unevangelized region beyond the Tana River to open up a medical mission amongst the Embus, one hundred miles from Nairobi. After many unlooked-for delays we were at length able to start for the trans-Tana country in the latter part of August. For a short time there was a large motor transport waggon running between Nairobi and Fort Hall, and we were fortunate enough to be able to avail ourselves of it. Instead, therefore, of being two or three days on the road as formerly, we covered the whole distance of sixty miles in six and a half hours. Our native servants who travelled with us were in the most exuberant state of delight and astonishment over this, the most wonderful journey of their lives! At noon we stopped for lunch at a little hotel built all of grass, and designated 'The

Blue Post.' It stands on the narrow strip of land between the Chania and the Thika Rivers, where the two magnificent waterfalls lend such a charm to the scenery. The Fort Hall road proved to be in a shocking condition, dangerous wash-aways occurring in the cuttings, and some of the bridges being broken. However, we succeeded in getting through without accident, for which we were deeply thankful.

The builder who had been entrusted with the contract for the erection of our new mission-house formed one of our party, his native workmen following on foot. At Fort Hall two rooms in an empty house were most kindly placed at our disposal by the Government officials, and during the two days we remained there, while providing for the transport of our luggage, we were shown considerable hospitality. At last we were able to dispatch our loads by native carriers, and to arrange for our own journey farther into the interior. Our new trap, which had been given to us by the Women's Auxiliary of the Church of England in Canada, had been drawn out from Nairobi by natives, and with our white mule inspanned was ready to carry us to Embuland. The first day our destination was Kabare, the C.M.S. station opened by my brother-in-law in the midst of the Ndia tribe, to whom he was the first missionary, as we were to be the pioneers to the Embus.

We had not gone far on our way when the mule had to be unharnessed and led down a terribly

steep and rocky hill which terminated in the valley of the Mathioya. When we reached the bank of this broad and beautiful stream we found to our dismay that the bridge was too narrow to take our trap, so my husband set to work to detach the wheels, and it was then hoisted up on to the shoulders of a dozen natives and carried safely to the farther side. After two hours of exceedingly rough travelling we reached the Tana, the principal river of East Africa, which is the home of innumerable hippopotami and crocodiles. Vast plains stretch as far as the eye can see in a south-easterly direction, and being a veritable zoological garden it is a favourite resort of big game hunters.

Having driven across the fine suspension bridge with which the Government has spanned this river, we proceeded on our way, every now and then meeting with some little stream which was hurrying along to empty itself into the Tana. These were bridged with such frail structures of mud and sticks, that it was sometimes just touch and go as to whether they could bear the weight of the trap, and generally both cart and bridge had to be carefully measured to ascertain whether the width was sufficient to admit of driving over. On one such flimsy bridge the wheels actually slipped over the edge, first on one side and then on the other, but were caught by projecting sticks, and thus the trap was saved from being overturned into the brook below. At noon we drew near to the River

Thiba, which is approached by an extremely precipitate and narrow defile. The mule had to be led down apart from the cart. My own mode of transit was not exactly enviable, first of all hanging from my husband's neck and then on the back of a Ndia woman who happened to come along! Once more our little vehicle was borne shoulder high by natives over the all too narrow native foot-bridge. Just after this we left the main road, and turned down a pathway cut by the paramount chief, Gutu, who bears rule over a great part of the Ndia tribe. Again the Thiba had to be crossed, and as we found only a hollowed-out trunk of a tree connecting with the opposite bank it proved a terribly awkward place to negotiate. There was nothing for it but to remove the wheels of the cart again, and even so it was only with the utmost difficulty that it could be carried across.

But now we were only three miles from Kabare, and very soon we were greeting our brother who had come to meet us. Presently, too, his wife and their two little children appeared, and we received a warm welcome to their station. They had been there only a few months, and were living in a temporary house of wattle and daub, but they had a well-ordered school and the little grass church was packed on Sunday. I was charmed with the situation of Kabare, the hill being covered with lovely trees, and having a fine view of the mountain.

Bidding farewell to our relatives a few days later we again had to traverse that dreadful log bridge

over the Thiba. Quite half-an-hour was lost in taking off and putting on the cart wheels, and another slipped by in waiting to see Chief Gutu at his village. He is certainly one of the cleverest and most dignified black men we have ever met in these uncivilized regions, and his influence over his 40,000 followers is enormous. His large homestead is enclosed within a strong stockade and consists of sixteen or eighteen huts (to accommodate his many wives) besides numerous granaries. He is very rich in cattle and flocks, and is a personality to be reckoned with by every traveller to the trans-Tana.

We lunched at noon in a most picturesque spot where a great natural bridge of stone spans a rocky stream. The road passes over the bridge, which is so overgrown with creepers and bushes as to be scarcely discernible, unless the traveller takes the trouble to climb down the bank and examine the massive pillars upon which it rests. I suppose that it is owing to the fact that it was not constructed by human hands that the natives have given it the name of *Thakama wa Ngai* (the bridge of God). We were told that it was here under the bridge that Chief Gutu secreted himself two years before after leading his warriors in an attempt to expel the white men from his country. When the fortunes of war turned against him he fled to the *Thakama wa Ngai* and the British forces were unable to find him. Some of the black soldiers pursued him to this spot, and even clam-

bered down to search for him under the rocky structure, where they fired a volley to terrify him, in the hope that he would rush out from his shelter. But old Gutu was too wary for that ! He lay perfectly still in his hiding place until, weary of the search, they gave it up and returned to the other troops. Not until darkness fell did the chief venture to creep to a place of safety.

The road now led through a great uninhabited wilderness, and we had not gone very far before we heard from some passing natives that there were rhinoceroses ahead ! It certainly looked as though wild beasts might spring at any moment from the dense jungle through which we were passing. The Doctor got out of the trap and walked along with his rifle, but nothing formidable appeared. But some of our native servants who were walking a little in advance were greatly startled by the appearance of four ponderous rhinos, and my husband very much regretted that we were a few minutes too late ! It was near this point of the road that he and his brother had been charged by a pair of rhinos about two years before.

Fort Embu, which we reached after a drive of about twelve miles, is delightfully situated on a fine hill overlooking the plains and the weary waste through which we had travelled. Just below it is a deep gorge through which flows the Ribongazi River. This forms the boundary between the Ndia and Embu territories. An exceedingly steep and narrow zig-zag 'cutting'

must be climbed to reach the top of the hill, which is prettily laid out and planted with avenues of trees leading to the Government bungalows and offices.

The assistant District Officer came out to welcome us and seemed intensely surprised at the sight of our little cart, which had the honour of being the first to be driven out to Embu. The superior officer being away, leave was kindly granted us to use his vacant house. The site selected for the new mission station was only about eight miles beyond the Fort. The natives have given the name of *Kigari*, or A Big Leopard, to the hill, doubtless owing to the prevalence of these beasts in the vicinity. On our arrival the local chief and many of his people ran out of their villages to greet us, and seemed to be really pleased that we were coming to live amongst them. Chief Kabuthi is a tall, lean man, and wears a dark-coloured blanket and an old felt hat. He brought the usual present of a sheep, and we bestowed suitable gifts in return. An exchange of gifts is the only basis of friendship that these primitive savages seem able to understand!

There was only a small cleared space on the hill-top where it was possible to pitch our tents, the jungle being so thick all around that it was difficult at first to get any adequate idea of the site. A large number of men had to be employed to clear it up as it was extremely unhealthy in its present condition. A pretty bit of woodland on one side

of the hill and a banana grove on the other were, however, interesting features, and when the clouds lifted, there was the most wonderful view of the mountain that we had ever seen. Looking towards the north-west it seemed to fill the landscape. We were indeed so near that the vast forest which encircles its base could be reached in an hour and a half, and it was difficult to believe that it was not nearer still, so clearly were the trees visible. The builder arrived the same day as ourselves with his Swahili masons, and the site of the house was soon staked out.

We had been living a whole month under canvas when one evening an army of soldier ants came up in thousands and laid siege to our tent and we were obliged ignominiously to surrender to the enemy and seek another shelter! Fortunately, a tiny shanty of wood and iron which was being put together for our temporary abode was almost finished and we were able to move into it.

Warriors of Embuland

CHAPTER XII

Amongst the Embus

THE Embus are a branch of the Kikuyu tribe, and inhabit the foothills on the east side of Mt. Kenia. It was not until after the Government had been some time firmly established in the Kikuyu country to the south and south-west of the mountain, that they turned their attention to the Embus. Every attempt to get on a friendly footing with this tribe completely failed, and the advance of the British force was resisted with all the strength they could muster. At last a punitive expedition was sent against them, about six years ago, which resulted in their complete subjugation.

From the latest reports there must be a population of about 200,000 in the Embu district, but this (for purposes of administration) includes also the Embere, Chuka, Mwimbi and part of the Ndia tribes. The whole territory is naturally but little known to outsiders, excepting to a few adventurous sportsmen for whom the country enfolds all that heart could wish in the way of big game. We are indeed living on the border of a

vast menagerie ! Some natives told us the other day of a fight that had just been witnessed on the plains between a buffalo and a lion. The king of beasts was worsted in the fray, and one of our informants offered us his claws for sale. In the glades of the great forest upon which we gaze from our mission station Ex-President Roosevelt has hunted elephants. The Duke of Connaught has also hunted in the district, and amongst many other trophies his party captured a baby rhino. This ponderous infant was kept alive for a time with cow's milk, our local chief Kabuthi supplying some of the cows for the purpose. Any kindness shown him by the chiefs the Duke rewarded right royally. He and the Duchess and Princess Patricia stayed a night at Fort Embu on their journey around Mt. Kenia. This was just before we entered the district.

We found the people very much like the Akikuyu, but somewhat wilder, less clothed and more degraded. Their customs are for the most part very similar. Much of their social life, however, is so debased that I can scarcely venture even to touch upon the subject. It is a striking fact that our Christian Embus all aspire to Kikuyu brides, feeling it impossible to marry girls of their own tribe. The villages in Embuland are much the same as amongst the Kikuyu, but the huts are smaller and not nearly so well built.

For some months after our arrival we were obliged to hold our services in the open air. The

chief, clad in a red blanket, topped with an old white helmet, was usually enthroned on a packing case, with several hundreds of his followers sitting in a large circle on the ground. The first few Sundays they seemed vastly amused, and often had to be rebuked for an outburst of laughter, especially when we began to sing or pray; indeed, we did not dare attempt the latter until they became a little more orderly. Humanly speaking, it seemed quite impossible to convey any spiritual truth to their darkened minds. But when our Master said, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,' He could not have intended the Embus to be omitted! Behind the divine command there is divine power,—power which can transform these degraded savages, and make them 'meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' If we doubted this we could not remain here. So, trustfully and hopefully, we took up the sacred charge of seeking to win a new tribe for God.

Amongst other building operations my husband soon started a large hospital chapel, which took nearly two months to complete, although we boasted no grander materials than the usual poles, sticks, mud and banana bark! The interior being neatly lined with white reeds from which the bark had been stripped, reminded us of the Uganda churches,[1] only that the workmanship was somewhat rougher. The next problem was

[1] We paid a visit to Uganda in 1905.

how to contrive seats for our congregation. This was eventually solved by having a great many long, straight poles brought from the forest, each of which when supported horizontally on small posts, emerging about a foot above the ground, formed quite as up-to-date a pew as we could desire, considering the present status of our parishioners! When all was finished there was seating accommodation for five hundred and fifty. The building is ninety feet long and twenty feet wide, and the top ridge pole is fifteen feet high.

The opening day arrived and it almost took our breath away to see the uproarious crowd of savages pouring in, and it required almost superhuman efforts to reduce them to any semblance of order! But the strains of the baby organ caught their attention and helped to silence the babel. As we had not used it for the open-air services most of them had never heard it before, and of course the unanimous verdict was, there was 'a spirit inside the box'!

An evangelistic school was started next day in the same building. Twenty-eight boys were duly enlisted as scholars, and a few days later the number was almost doubled, but to my dismay they all went 'on strike,' demanding wages for thus obliging the Europeans! The situation had to be carefully explained, and we tried to make them understand that the obligation was the other way round. When they found that we were quite firm, and prepared to close the school if need be, then most of

The Belfry, Embu Medical Mission

Medical Assistants and Pupil Teachers, Embu

them gave in, and settled down quietly. The following month quite ninety pupils had been enrolled, but the average attendance was about seventy-five.

One day not very long after our arrival many of the veterans of the tribe came up to do honour to *Gitari* by admitting him to the Council of Elders. This being regarded as a great occasion, Dr. Crawford presented them with a bull as an initiation fee (it being customary to give either a sheep or a bull). They sat around in a ring, with the new candidate in their midst. Two of the elders came forward and extended their hands over him, invoking the blessing of *Ngai*, and imploring Him to bestow sheep, cattle, fruitful gardens and all other temporal mercies upon the new member of their council. All present grunted their assent to every sentence in unison. When the bull was slaughtered they bestowed a large piece of meat upon the new member, and then he was permitted to retire. A week later the council assembled again, and once more the Doctor was summoned to their midst. This time a fat sheep was presented to him, and his elder's staff, which he was expected to use as a walking-stick. Then one of the *athuri* rose and told him that he had been elected president of the *Kiama*, as a token of their appreciation of his services to the people He also proclaimed that in future Sunday was to be observed as a day of rest, and that their boys were to be allowed to attend the school. Further

blessings were then invoked, much the same as on the former occasion, after which they took their departure. The chief himself, Kabuthi, is not a member of the Council of Elders, being too young at present to be admitted to the charmed circle. He is an animist of animists, and although he likes to appear friendly and even went so far as to attend school for a few days with some of his councillors, yet we very soon discovered that he had a horror of any of his people being turned away from the superstitions of their ancestors, in which spirit worship plays such a conspicuous part.

The work was still quite in its initial stage when our Bishop and his daughter paid us a visit. We were living almost in camp fashion at the time, but notwithstanding this it was a great pleasure to welcome them. The great event of their short stay was a Confirmation service. The four candidates were amongst those who had been baptized at Kahuhia just before we left for England, and they had been very carefully prepared during the previous months. All were medical assistants except Marko the cook. It was very impressive to see these, our children in the Faith, kneeling before the Bishop, whilst we fervently echoed his prayer that they might 'continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto their lives' end.' A solemn Communion service followed, when our dear Kikuyu boys gathered with us to remember our Lord's death 'till He come.'

A few weeks later, after our visitors had left us

An Embu Warrior

and the mission-house was nearing completion, one Sunday evening our tin shanty was overrun with soldier ants. With the help of our boys we endeavoured to fight them back by pouring red hot ashes and paraffin on their track, and were all badly bitten in the attempt. Finally we decided to escape from the invaders by a hasty removal into the new house, just as we had evacuated the tent for the cottage five months before. These terrible pests are a perpetual menace all over the country. Many a time travellers have had to turn out of their tents at night because of a besieging army of *siafu* (the Swahili name for these biting ants). We once had them in our bedroom during our stay at Kabete, and after battling with the foe for an hour and a half, we had to retire for the night with the room reeking of paraffin.

Some months ago they attacked a favourite cat and her kitten, the latter being so thickly covered as to be almost unrecognizable. As soon as we discovered their dreadful predicament we called our little house boys to the rescue, and although constantly getting bitten themselves they laboured most perseveringly until every ant was extracted. I say 'extracted' advisedly, as these ants fasten their fangs, which are like a sharp pair of forceps, deep into the flesh, and they can seldom be removed without drawing blood. The poor wee kitten lay bleeding and exhausted, but remembering the proverbial nine lives a cat is supposed to possess we hoped it would survive. Placing cat and kitten

comfortably in another house we left them for the night. Imagine then our distress at finding them in the morning again covered with these dreadful pests! This time the unfortunate kitten was just breathing its last, so we concentrated all our efforts on the poor mother, but in spite of all that we could do she died of blood-poisoning a few days later.

It is a pitiful sight to discover a whole brood of little chickens smothered with these ants. Dipping our hands into paraffin and water we pick them off as fast as we can, but it is seldom that more than two or three will outlive the frightful siege they have experienced, and of course the mother-hen herself may not survive. Insect life is one of the small trials the missionary or settler has to face in the tropics. The well-known white ants are not so much a source of personal inconvenience as the soldier ants, but they are extremely destructive to property. If they get under your matting, or behind your photographs and pictures, or invade your library, they will generally do untold damage before they are discovered. But the most terrible of insect pests are the jiggers, which bore deep into your flesh to lay their eggs, creating a shocking amount of pain and irritation. We have many times seen little children brought to the dispensary with their fingers and toes eaten off by jiggers, and the wounds in a state of horrible suppuration.

A tiny girl two or three years of age was suddenly left on our hands one day, her mother having died in the hospital from a loathsome disease which at

the last attacked her throat. The poor little creature was almost a skeleton, and her feet and hands were in a dreadful condition from jiggers. She could only hobble along on her heels, as her toes caused her so much pain. We gave her some disinfectant baths, had nearly a hundred jiggers extracted, and her maimed limbs carefully doctored and bandaged. She soon became every one's pet, and is now learning to read in school. The bright, merry little girl who runs about the station to-day could hardly be recognized as the forlorn little waif who so deeply touched our sympathies a year ago.

In spite of a good deal of secret opposition the school has continued to progress very satisfactorily. In 1911 the attendance averaged about eighty-five, but in 1912 it ranged between one hundred and one hundred and twenty. As the boys are mostly named after wild animals, birds and insects, etc., the roll call is decidedly amusing, and reads somewhat like this :—Giraffe, son of Buffalo ; Frog, son of Ostrich ; Elephant, son of Hawk ; Hippopotamus, son of Crocodile ; Ostrich, son of Rhinoceros ; Giraffe, son of Rat. I taught each one to stand and salute when his name was called and they were very proud of the accomplishment ! The first half hour in school has always been devoted to Scripture teaching. A Bible lesson follows the opening hymn, and an appeal is often made to the hearts and consciences of the scholars.

I soon found it necessary to prepare a series of graded reading sheets in the Embu dialect. These

were printed at the mission press in Frere Town and have been most useful in securing not only the interest of the pupils but their rapid advancement also. Much of my time has of necessity been taken up with translational work to meet the ever growing needs of both church and school. The dialect is considerably different from the Kikuyu language. The linguistic difficulties we have had to wrestle with since coming to Embu may be better appreciated by the reader if I present the Lord's Prayer in the two vernaculars.

The Lord's Prayer in Kikuyu

Baba witu wee uri matwini, Ritwa riaku riamurwo, Uthamaki waku oke, Kwenda gwaku kugie thi ta uria gutarie matwini, Utuhe umuthi irio citu cia gutuigana, uturekere mehia maitu, ta uria ithui turekagera aria matuehagia, Ndugatutware ugerioine, no utuhonokie uruini, Kwondu uthamaki ni waku, ona hinya, ona ugocwo, tene na tene. Amina.

The Lord's Prayer in Embu

Vava wetu uri mature, Ritwa reaku renenevue, Uthamaki waku oke, Marwendo maku marutwe mavorore toria marutagwa mature. Utuve omonthi irio cetu cia gutuigana. Utukirire mevia metu, toria tumakiragira aria matuevagia. Ndokatuvire ugeriare, no utuvonokie weeire. Kwa undu uthamaki ni waku, na vinya, na ugocwa, tene na tene. Amina.

The 1st Embu Company of the Boys' Brigade
Embu Medical Mission School

Knowing that the corruption of the village life was several degrees worse in Embuland than in the Kikuyu country, we tried to make it possible for as many of our boys as desired to escape from its impurity to do so. To this end Dr. Crawford put up some large dormitories. He also built a club-room where our lads might spend their evenings innocently and profitably in reading, singing hymns and playing simple games. We still adhere to our original decision not to give any of our boarders money except for actual work accomplished. Food is generally supplied to them from their villages, the parents' consent being first obtained for them to live on the station. In this way they are neither pampered nor pauperized. All are expected to perform at least five hours of manual labour a day, besides attending school and classes. In order to yet further discipline the boys, my husband organized a company of the Boys' Brigade, which has been duly enrolled at headquarters with himself as captain. It is amusing to watch them at drill. No arms whatever are used, the only object being to instil the qualities of order, obedience and reverence. When there is no drill the boys may usually be seen throwing themselves heartily into a game of football when the work of the day is over. Such a change was taking place in the ideals of our scholars that the chief and many of the elders became greatly alarmed, and for a time the attendance at school was much reduced.

One is not very long in the mission field without realizing that there is a hard spiritual fight to be fought. Behind the evil heathen customs there is a personality, and when we missionaries attack them we find that we wake up the forces of the evil one. Our teaching naturally strikes at the very root of the foolish superstitions and degrading customs with which the Prince of Darkness seeks to bind these primitive people body and soul. In the clear light of Gospel truth they stand revealed in their true character, and the pupil at the mission school learns to regard them with aversion. 'The entrance of Thy Word giveth light.' He can no longer bear to participate in what he now sees to be displeasing to God. From that point of course the real conflict begins. But for those who know that they are on the winning side there is nothing to fear, though temporary rebuffs may be encountered. The 'Captain of their salvation' has never known defeat, and the weakest of His soldiers may learn to triumph in His blessed Name!

CHAPTER XIII

With the Savage Chukas

AS the work of a medical mission grows it becomes increasingly difficult to get away from the station, but we longed to carry the light of the Gospel a little farther into the dense darkness of Heathendom, so in September, 1911, we arranged a *safari* that would take us through eastern Embuland into the country of the Chukas. After rapidly completing our preparations we set out one morning, my husband, as usual, riding his mule, and I in a camp chair slung on two strong bamboo poles. The long file of porters kept up a constant chatter as they swung along the narrow path with their burdens. Our good, faithful Josiah (medical assistant) walked by my side all the way, keeping a steadying hand on my chair in every rough or dangerous place, and sometimes even plunging into mud or water in his anxiety to secure my safety.

There had been much to occupy us during the past busy days, but now, with our faces set towards the unknown regions beyond, our minds were free

to dwell on the solemn privilege which was to be ours within the next few days, of planting our footsteps where no missionaries had ever been before. Our hearts ascended in prayer that, however unworthy, our God would graciously cleanse and prepare His instruments. Up and down we went, sometimes almost pushing our way through a dense tangle of bush, or threading our path through fertile vales covered with native gardens, or yet again crossing with wary footsteps some slender pole where a mountain streamlet tumbled its noisy career over rocks and boulders. A beautiful dome-shaped hill completely mantled with forest trees attracted our attention, and we were told it was a sacred grove of the Embu tribe where sacrifices were wont to be offered to propitiate the spirits. Although the forest abounds with Colybus monkeys, yet not one of them must be killed lest the anger of the ghosts which are supposed to frequent these glades should be aroused.

As we neared the River Ena we heard the roar of falling water, and in another minute a most lovely cascade was presented to our view. But we could not stay to explore the beauties of the scene. After three hours of travelling we arrived at our first camp, near the village of a chief named Ronenji. As we had sent some of our boys and porters ahead of us we found the tents pitched and all in readiness. The chief was unfortunately away from home so we did not see him. A native

dance, performed by young men with decorated shields, was in full swing, and there was no possibility of settling down until late at night on account of the din and noise. The next day, Sunday, some sick people gathered around for treatment and a service was held for them. In the evening, a large sheet having been stretched between two poles in the open air, a lantern lecture was given portraying the Life of our Lord.

The whole camp was astir at daybreak the following morning, and after a hasty breakfast we set out again, this time making for Kagani's, the most influential chief in eastern Embuland, just two hours away. We passed through a most delightful country, richly wooded and undulating, and with extensive patches of native cultivation, witnessing to a numerous population.

On a wide green sward outside the chief's village, where several large trees afford a pleasant shade, the tents were rapidly set up by many willing hands. Presently some of Kagani's wives paid us a visit, and then the chief himself appeared. He sat and chatted with us for some time, and then carried the Doctor off to see his homestead. In the cool of the afternoon I was carried over there in my chair at the chief's request. Having had a lantern lighted he proceeded to show us the interior of his huts, which were unusually well made and divided into a number of sleeping compartments, with beds built up of sticks high above the ground, and covered with grass and

blankets. But all was so intensely dark that we should have seen nothing had it not been for the dim flicker of the dirty lamp. It was quite the best village we had seen, but some of the larger huts were evidently built by Swahilis, who travel about for purposes of trade, sowing, alas! the seeds of Islam wherever they go.

On leaving Kagani's we directed our steps towards the land of the Chukas. In approaching this country from Embuland, native villages and gardens gradually disappear and the traveller passes through a veritable desert where beasts of prey lurk unmolested. Then comes a great deep ravine with a dreadfully steep and rocky pathway leading down to a turbid stream below, and up again, a long, hard climb, till the crest of the hill is reached on the farther side. In the old days the Embus did not dare to cross this ravine, as the Chukas and themselves were always at enmity. If a man ventured to pass through the country with a herd of cattle or goats, the latter would invariably be seized and himself murdered. But since the British Government conquered these tribes, all inter-tribal warfare has ceased. After a three hours' march we reached the homestead of Mutua, one of the most important Chuka chiefs, and were soon surrounded by his people as we pitched our tents. They appeared to us just like a lot of little children in their primitive simplicity, so full of curiosity and wonder at all that pertained to the white man.

Some Chuka Boys

The face of the one in the centre is covered with white clay

Chief Mutua was soon seen emerging from the thick banana grove which hides his village from view, and very friendly were the greetings when he discovered the purpose of our visit. His wives also came to see us and invited us over to the homestead, going away happy with their hands filled with coarse salt, which is always deemed a luxury amongst African savages. It did not take long for the news to spread that the white medicine man had arrived with boxes filled with *muthaiga*. The people gathered in crowds to be treated, and as they crouched together on the ground they heard for the first time the wonderful story of God's redeeming love. In the evening a lantern service brought still more vividly before these depraved savages the life and death and resurrection of the Saviour of the world. But when they saw the picture of the suffering body suspended from a cross of wood they pained us by their laughter and rude jests, showing how little their darkened minds could understand that marvellous Sacrifice for sin.

This country is even more richly wooded than Embuland, and the villages are for the most part completely obscured by trees and bushes, or plantations of bananas. The Chukas are a most exclusive tribe, and keep almost entirely to their own territory, not intermarrying with other tribes, or going abroad in search of work. They have a reputation for being very wild and dangerous. Even quite recently the officials have had poisoned

arrows shot at them from ambush while riding through the country for the purpose of collecting hut tax. Until lately the frontiers of the Chuka territory were enclosed by a thorny hedge entered only by gateways which were barricaded at night, and guarded by sentinels by day. But these barricades have been torn down by order of the Government. To still further protect themselves from enemies the people dig pitfalls near the villages, lined with sharp-pointed stakes, and skilfully covered with sticks and greenery so as to escape detection. Besides these man-traps they dig large pits in the same way to catch elephants and other wild beasts in the Kenia forest. The animals falling in are impaled on the sharp stakes, and so are easily dispatched. The physical condition of this tribe is worse than that of any of the others with which we have come in contact, and during the few days we were able to spend amongst them patients came around the Doctor in hundreds, seeming really grateful for the opportunity of being helped.

The dialect of these interesting people differs considerably from that of the Kikuyu and Embu tribes, so that it was not always easy to make ourselves understood. The cast of countenance is also somewhat distinctive, with an unusual width between the eyes. Clothing is reduced to a minimum! Goatskins, beads and red clay, all play their part as with most of the barbarous tribes of Africa; but many of the men and women

seem to attempt no other covering than a frill of banana leaves round the waist. American cotton and blankets are, however, being gradually introduced amongst the male portion of the community. They appear to be quite devoid of the scruples of their Kikuyu and Embu neighbours with regard to food, and will eat almost any kind of meat that comes in their way, even that of the hyæna, which is reckoned most unclean by the Akikuyu, who consider it ceremonially defiling to touch any meat except beef or mutton, even a domestic fowl or a partridge being absolutely tabooed!

A desire was expressed by the chief Mutua that a missionary might be sent to teach his people, and leading the Doctor to a very beautiful hill he offered it to him as a site for a mission station. He also brought two boys to us (one of them his own son) that they might be educated at our school. Two other Chuka boys followed after us, appearing at our next camp, and begging that they too might be allowed to return with us and learn to read. We longed that these lads might some day go back to evangelize their own people, and we kept this thought before us, praying that a work of grace might be begun in their hearts. Some of them had already joined the inquirers' class after being some months on our station, when we were informed one day that they had run away. As they always seemed quite happy and contented while with us, we could only draw the conclusion

that some adverse influence had crept in, and that Mutua had recalled them in consequence.

During our short visit to the Chuka chief's village, a tiny little fellow, named Kipande, one of Mutua's sons, took an extraordinary fancy to us and hovered continually about our tent. On the morning of our departure, as our caravan wound its way through the banana grove near the homestead, we found our small friend awaiting us on the pathway. He had evidently made up his mind to accompany us, as the childish voice was heard shouting, 'Are you going away and leaving your child behind?' As the pathetic appeal brought no response, it was followed by loud sobbing. We were unable, of course, to accede to his request. But I have never ceased to remember little Kipande, and to pray that some day the way may open for him to be brought to the missionaries and led into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

We parted from our Chuka acquaintances with mutual regrets, many of them asking us when we would come again. Retracing our steps we re-crossed the ravine and trudged along for nearly four hours until we arrived at the village of an Embu chief named Weimiri, where we remained two or three days, helping all the sick folk who came our way, and delivering our message to the people. From thence we returned to the station, having travelled about sixty miles in ten days.

CHAPTER XIV

Out of the Jaws of Death

WE had not been many weeks in Embuland before a small temporary dispensary was opened. Not many patients came round at first, but it did not take long for the 'white doctor's' fame to spread, and during a few months the numbers rose steadily until at last there were three or four hundred patients daily. It was indeed a formidable task to attend to them all! Watching this pathetic throng of diseased and suffering humanity one was often reminded of the word, 'When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them.' Day by day at the dispensary door they heard, for the first time, of that tender, compassionate Saviour Who could heal, not only physical infirmity, but soul sickness too.

Many had to be received at once as in-patients, and a number of little temporary huts were hastily run up for their accommodation. But as they continued to press upon us it became necessary to erect some large hospital wards. The doctor and his young assistants threw themselves energeti-

cally into the work, and before many months had passed we had a spacious hospital compound composed of six large wards, with sleeping capacity for over a hundred people. A long shed was also built for the out-patient department, the whole forming one large square. Then came the labour of making beds of native materials, which involved still harder toil than the building of the houses. Seventy-five cots were at length completed, and it did not take long to fill them with patients. The Embus being accustomed to sleep on a bundle of banana leaves strewn on the mud floor of their dwellings, regarded the hospital accommodation as positive luxury, and it has generally been a difficult matter to get them to leave when convalescent!

A special service for in-patients was now instituted, with the hope that many of these poor creatures, hearing the Gospel every day (some of them for many months at a time) might be able to return to their own people with a new and wonderful story of a Saviour 'able to save to the uttermost' all who come to Him for spiritual healing.

Our patients were, of course, terribly superstitious. When the first death occurred in the hospital we were dismayed to find that there was a general stampede, and quite half of them returned to their homes! This was because they feared that the ghost of the dead man would haunt the ward in which he died, and possibly bring some calamity upon all the inmates. It was, however, cheering

to notice that it was chiefly the newer patients who had left, thus demonstrating that the older ones had more or less profited from the teaching.

The C.M.S. having made a grant for the erection of a stone Dispensary and Operating Room, the European builder turned his attention to this as soon as he had completed the mission-house. My husband spent several days when it was finished in fitting it up with the necessary shelves and tables. Six months had passed away and the medical mission was now successfully established, with representatives of all the trans-Tana tribes to be found amongst the patients, many of whom had to travel two or three days in order to reach us.

But here I must retrace my steps to relate the remarkable chain of circumstances which led to such a rapid development of the work.

The local chief, Kabuthi, had shown a most friendly attitude towards us, and seemed to realize that we had come to help his people. Soon after our arrival he was stricken down with a virulent form of malarial fever. In spite of all Dr. Crawford's efforts he did not seem to gain any ground, and upon investigation it was found that he was not always taking the medicine that had been given him, on the contrary the native medicine men were asserting their influence over him, and he was being dosed with their concoctions. Every missionary in this part of Africa, and most particularly every medical missionary, must sooner or later come up against the opposition of these wizard-quacks.

Kabuthi's village lies on the slope of our hill, only a few hundred yards from the mission station. There he had lain many days, wasted by the ever-recurring attacks, and reduced almost to a skeleton. One day my husband paid him a visit at an unwonted hour, and a strange scene confronted him. The patient lay on the ground outside his hut, and by his side was a *mundu mugo* (medicine man), preparing to slaughter a sheep in order to appease the offended spirits who were supposed to be causing the sickness. Pointing to the sheep, the Doctor indignantly inquired if it was intended for a sacrifice. The reply was in the affirmative. 'Then,' said my husband to the chief, 'if you are going to allow this sacrifice to be offered I shall drop your case!' Looking sternly in the direction of the medicine man, he added, 'You have to choose between that man and *me*!' The result of this was that Kabuthi, thus appealed to, decided in favour of *Gitari*, and the sheep having been driven back to the flock, the *mundu mugo* beat an ignominious retreat, slinking out of the village in a decidedly crestfallen manner. Turning towards his patient again my husband impressed upon him the absolute futility of such a sacrifice as that which he had been about to offer, which could not possibly propitiate the holy God, but would rather tend to bring down His righteous anger upon him. Then he went on to expatiate upon the One great Sacrifice which had been offered up long ago when God sent His only-begotten Son into the world to die for sinners.

Two Embere Chiefs

Chief Kabuthi

The Embu Hospital Compound

The young medical assistant, Josiah Gathu, himself a Heathen only a few years back, added an impressive testimony to the words which had just been spoken.

After this all went well for a time, and the chief seemed to be approaching convalescence, but, alas! there came a sudden relapse, and early one morning a messenger came running up the hill to tell us that Kabuthi had been carried out into the thicket to die. The Doctor hurried to the scene, and was shocked to find the unfortunate chief lying out on the damp ground in the woods. Dissolution certainly seemed imminent, for the limbs were stiff and cold, and the eyes glazed, while no gleam of consciousness remained. A few of his followers were watching with frightened faces at a little distance, not daring to approach the dying man. My husband quickly administered a restorative, gave directions for the hospital stretcher to be brought, and then knelt in prayer, asking that in God's great mercy this life might be given back, and that Kabuthi might yet learn to know and love Him. He was carried up the hill and placed on a bed in one of the hospital huts. How we cried to God that day, as we feared the result to our work if the chief should die just at this juncture! And very graciously the answer came. The stiffened limbs relaxed, the pulse quickened and consciousness returned. The people were greatly awed, and said he was brought back from the dead! Day by day the poor man

gained a little strength, until he was able to sit up in bed, and later on to creep out of the hut and lie in the sunshine. Then he said to the Doctor, ‘ You are my saviour ! you have brought me back from the grave ! you have resurrected me ! ’ Promptly the answer was given that it was all God’s wonderful goodness, and that the Doctor was only His instrument. As we saw our patient recovering, our hearts were filled with chastened thankfulness, and we realized more than ever before that God Himself had sent us to Embuland, and that He was confirming our message with ‘ signs following.’

Since then Kabuthi has had several serious attacks of illness, but the means used have always been blessed to his recovery, and he is to-day a fairly healthy man, able to administer his largely increased district, and to walk and ride about the country getting in the hut tax for the Government. When he was convalescent he promised that he would learn to read the Word of God for himself, but like a ruler of old he has put it off till ‘ a more convenient season ’ !

I have already mentioned Gutu, the powerful chief of the Ndia tribe. We had not been long at our new station when one day a messenger arrived from him, imploring Dr. Crawford to go to his assistanee as he was most seriously ill. My husband at once put together such drugs and applianees as he felt the case demanded, and

hurried off with his young assistants to a village several hours distant from our station, where the chief happened to be staying. It certainly seems that this visit was instrumental in saving his life, as he was wonderfully relieved, and a few days later was able to be carried to the hospital. Here the help he received was blessed to his complete recovery, and after a fortnight of careful attention and nursing he was able to return home. This case was naturally a great advertisement for our work amongst the Ndia people, and hundreds of them began flocking to us for treatment, until at last Gutu grew alarmed, as he feared that many might want to settle near the Mission. Instead of remembering that, under God, he owed his life to the medical mission, he became inflamed with jealousy. *Gitari* was getting too powerful and his influence must be checked! Having discussed the matter with the paramount chief of Ndialand, they called their sub-chiefs and headmen together, and issued an order that in future no sick people were to go to the hospital without permission being obtained from them in every individual case. Most of those who were already with us as in-patients were recalled. Not only so, but emissaries were sent out to inform other influential chiefs amongst the adjacent tribes of their movements and to request them to join the combine. It seemed to us the height of cruelty to prevent thousands of suffering people from getting medical help, so an appeal was made

to the Government. The chiefs thereupon received instructions that they must cease to interfere with the work of the Mission, and that they were not to prevent patients from obtaining succour from the hospital. I may here mention that we have uniformly received the greatest kindness and courtesy from the officials of the province, especially from the present Commissioner, Mr. C. R. W. Lane.

Although the chiefs professed the most complete ignorance of any attempt to restrict our usefulness, yet they continued to secretly carry on their opposition, with the result that the attendance at the dispensary dropped to about one half. However, with an average of two hundred out-patients a day, and the large in-patient department, in addition to the constant building operations, the Doctor and his helpers were anything but idle.

A year passed away, and again chief Gutu lay at death's door, worn almost to a shadow from the most malignant form of malaria, complicated with dysentery. For a whole month he lay sick; but although my husband several times sent messages to him, expressing his willingness to receive him as before, yet he was ashamed to come to us after all the antagonism he had shown to our work. In the end, however, he overcame his scruples, realizing that it was his only hope of life. Naturally a twenty mile journey did not

improve his condition, and for some days after his admission to the hospital poor Gutu hovered between life and death. It was an anxious time for us, and many were the prayers that ascended for his recovery, as we feared the effect on the superstitious minds of the people should this important chief die on our hands. Everything that could be devised for his relief and comfort was attempted. Our efforts were at last rewarded in seeing the tide turn, and the serious symptoms begin to abate. He was, however, extremely prostrated, and it took six weeks of unremitting care before our patient could be pronounced cured. During this tedious illness we both endeavoured to bring him into touch with the Great Physician, entreating him to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Most attentively he listened to our messages by his sick bed, and the proud chief became so softened and responsive, that we could hardly realize that it was Gutu! But no real heart surrender ensued. Like the young rich man to whom our Saviour appealed when on earth, 'he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.' His protracted stay in hospital, however, led to the removal of many prejudices, and to the establishment of a very friendly feeling which must ultimately tend to the furtherance of the work.

Just two or three other cases I would mention, amongst many others almost equally interesting. The Embu are not a whit behind the Akikuyu in

the horrible practice of poisoning, many a one being secretly put out of the way in order to obtain possession of property, or because of revenge or jealousy. One such case was that of a chief from a village several miles away, who was brought to the hospital apparently in a dying condition. The treatment he received was the means under God of restoring him to health. The day after his return home he appeared again with the present of a goat and kid for his *muvonokia* (saviour from death), as he called the Doctor. Such an evidence of gratitude touched us deeply, as it is a very rare commodity amongst these barbaric tribes. Another case was that of a tall, fine-looking young warrior, who was carried here on a litter by his relatives. He and a warrior friend had both been poisoned at the same time. The latter preferred to remain under the care of a native medicine man, with a fatal result, while the other who had been brought to the hospital made a good recovery.

Cases of injury from wild beasts are not at all uncommon. A native came to us one day in a terrible plight, having been severely mauled by a man-eating lion. It seems that it had attacked the homestead at night and was in the act of carrying off a warrior whom it had killed, when this man rushed in and after a fearful struggle, which nearly cost him his life, succeeded in dispatching the ferocious beast with his spear. It was most fortunate for him that there was a

medical mission within reach where his wounds could be attended to. At the time of writing there is a little girl under treatment who was brought here by her mother. She had been terribly bitten by a leopard, and the wounds and subsequent shock would in all probability have caused her death, had not prompt and skilful treatment been obtainable.

The work of the medical mission is now known far and wide, and we cannot but praise God for the lives that have been rescued, and the thousands who have heard the news of His great salvation.

CHAPTER XV

Witnessing to Tribes beyond

IT had been much upon our minds that some of the wild tribes to the east of Mt. Kenia had never yet heard the Gospel, so availing ourselves of the dry season of August, 1912, we planned a medical itineration, that should include the Embere, Chuka and Mwimbi countries, as well as eastern Embuland. Leaving our station with a large caravan of natives carrying our camp outfit and medical loads, we stayed at Fort Embu over Sunday, and on Monday morning made an early start in the direction of Embereland.

We had already descended about 1,000 feet in approaching the Fort, and our pathway still continued to decline as we left the Embu highlands and traversed a vast plain, where for many miles no native dwellings or signs of cultivation are to be seen. Wild beasts in this region are exceedingly numerous, and our attendants often pointed out the spoor of rhinoceroses and buffaloes, while herds of hartebeestes and other antelopes were much in evidence. We camped near the banks of a river

which forms the boundary of the Embu and Embere territories, and here we were met by chief Rumbia, who had come on purpose to escort us to his country and homestead. He showed great pleasure at our intended visit, and begged that we should stay 'not three days but three months.' Towards sunset a leopard was seen near the camp, and porters and boys all turned out in search of it, the Doctor leading the party with his rifle, but it slunk away into the bush and was not seen again. We were told that this camp was the site of a battle between the Embus and the Emberes a few years ago.

The following day we were early on the road, I in my *safari* chair borne by relays of four Embu carriers, but my husband and all the rest of the party on foot, his mule having died some months before. The long, coarse grass of the plain is studded with wild olive and other trees, but the landscape for the most part presented a scorched and blasted appearance on account of the Embere custom of burning the grass in the dry season. Chief Rumbia strode on ahead of the caravan with a few of his special followers, looking quite an important personage, with a towering headdress of monkey skin, and a black and red blanket draped around his tall, thin figure.

Our faces were set in an easterly direction towards the mountains which skirted the plains, for there amongst the hillsides the Embere people have built their villages. After a three hours'

journey we found ourselves nearing the home of the paramount chief. The wilderness now lay far below us as we wound our way up a hill through a plantation of bananas, sugar-cane and beans, until we came upon a large cluster of bee-hive huts, and Rumbia's children crept out to gaze in wonder at the unwonted cavalcade. A few hundred yards on there proved to be a fairly good camping-ground, and here the tents were quickly erected and we took our midday meal sitting under the shade of a big tree, chatting with the chief's wives and others who gathered around.

This is a great rhinoceros country. A friendly native showed us some enormous footprints quite close to the camp, telling us that they were those of a rhino who had paid a visit to the place the previous night. This incident recalls an alarming experience which befell one of the Government officials some time ago when on *safari*. Hearing some unusual sounds at midnight he went out of his tent to look around, leaving a friend asleep in a camp bed. Presently a great blundering form came tearing through the darkness and a rhino dashed into the tent, smashing it up and dragging it away into the bush. Strange to say the officer found his friend still in his bed, uninjured, though he had had a decidedly rude awakening!

A circle of Embere patients and others soon gathered around the Doctor and his assistants, listening to the story of our Saviour's love. The boxes were rapidly opened up, bottles, ointments,

and bandages were produced, and the ministry of healing was soon in full swing. We stayed four days at Rumbia's village, and hundreds of poor, suffering people were relieved. The chief himself attended the services, interrupting the preacher with quite intelligent questions and acknowledging that 'the words were very good.' The last evening a lantern service was given on our Lord's life and death. It was only attended by the men and boys, as the women were not allowed to come out at night. All down the ages the Embere people had been left in their darkness and degradation, but now the first glimmering of the Eternal Light was breaking in upon them. Will they follow the gleam? Will they respond to the message which God's servants have come so far to bring? Oh how fervently we pray that they may respond, and that we may have the joy of seeing some of these neglected savages transformed by the Holy Spirit's power!

During our stay at Rumbia's another Embere chief, named Mugo, came to see us and begged the Doctor to pay a visit to his village to heal his sick people; so, taking it as an indication of God's leading, we decided to go; more especially as my husband wanted to discover whether it was possible to secure a site near the Ena River for a mission station.

Although we breakfasted soon after half-past five, and broke camp shortly after 6 A.M. the heat became intense as we travelled due east with the

rising sun in our faces. Our path lay over a low mountain range and was very rough and rocky, while every now and again we would plunge down into some dried-up rivulet bed, a mass of stones and boulders. There was a most glorious view of Mount Kenia, looking back over the plain which we had traversed a few days ago, and the snowy peak was glistening in the sunshine. It took us three hours and forty minutes to reach our camp by the Ena River, and we were all very weary and glad of a rest on our arrival.

We found the altitude by our aneroid to be only 3,500 feet, which is very low indeed for the highlands of East Africa, and the whole neighbourhood seemed too unhealthy for European occupation. The river was, however, very beautiful, with lofty palms and other lovely trees lining its banks, and a miniature cascade making music as it leapt over the rocks. The natives had constructed a most picturesque-looking bridge close to the little waterfall, and the whole effect was very charming.

After about fifty patients had been treated by the Ena River bank, and the Old, Old Story again proclaimed to those who had never heard it before, we packed up our kit and moved on again. We now had to leave the Government pathway and cut across country in a north-westerly direction in order to connect with the road leading to the Chuka country. I suppose had we really known what was before us we would have preferred to

have retraced our steps and to have gone a long way round rather than attempt it.

How can I describe it? It was impossible to carry me in the *safari* chair, so I had recourse to the hammock which we had brought for such emergencies. After crossing the Ena we found ourselves in a dense thicket, and two men had to go in front of us and cut a passage for the hammock with their native swords. The monotony of the jungle was alternated with a breathless scrambling over great rocks which here and there were flung across the track. Our good medical assistants, Josiah and Simeon, never faltered in their watchful care over me, helping the bearers to lift the hammock in dangerous places; but even so I was several times bumped on the rocks and scratched by sharp thorns as we simply tore our way through the terrible prickly bushes. It was a hard climb, too, for the first two hours, but at last we emerged upon a burnt-up, desolate-looking plain; yet even this was a relief after the dreadful thorn jungle we had passed through.

We now made better progress, and the weary wilderness disappeared at length, giving place to green trees and bushes, and patches of native plantation, showing us that we were nearing inhabited country again. The village of Kagani came into view, with a nice green sward with shady trees for a camping ground. What an oasis it seemed after the toilsome journey of the past four and a half hours! Although we had breakfasted at 5.30 we

were too weary to touch any luncheon until 2 p.m. Chief Kagani being away from home, nothing could be done at this place, so we remained but one night, and the only event to be recorded seems to be the visit of a leopard to the camp at midnight. Though it prowled around near our tents it was mercifully prevented from doing us injury.

On August 31 we turned towards Chukaland, and going by a new Government road passed through a beautiful and well-watered country on the Embu side. But the hills were exceedingly heavy, and two deep gorges had to be crossed before we entered the Chuka territory. The officer at Fort Embu had sent a letter warning us that the Chukas were in a very restless condition, and that several murders had been perpetrated recently, so he begged us to be particularly careful and to keep to the main road, as he felt some anxiety on our account.

The first halt in Chukaland was made at the village of Kangangi, where the people crowded around us all day long, watching our movements with great curiosity, but seeming very timid and suspicious. However, they attended the services very well, and we trust some good was done. The next camp was near the village of Kabandango, but as that chief had been called to the Fort about some murder cases we missed seeing him, and his people seemed afraid to come near us in the absence of the chief. The whole journey through the Chuka and Mwimbi countries is wearisome in the

extreme; not that the scenery is dull and uninteresting,—very far from it,—but a whole series of deep ravines confront the traveller, and he has no sooner emerged from one and begun to fill his lungs with the cooler air of the hilltops, than he must begin again to plunge down into another deep gorge. Following the zig-zag path far away down into the valley he then starts toiling up another terrific hill, always fervently hoping it may be the last. These deep ravines are sometimes extremely beautiful, filled with tropical vegetation, with towering and majestic trees, and ferns in wonderful variety; and always the swiftly flowing river, dashing over boulders, and the little wooden footbridge, sometimes none too secure!

So we passed through the Chuka country, and pitched our tents in the vicinity of the village of Njage, a chief of the Mwimbi tribe. Here we met the famous hunter, Mr. R. J. Cunninghame,[1] who had charge of Colonel Roosevelt's African hunting expedition. During the following night a hyæna visited his tent and carried off one of his boots into the bush, where after much searching it was found, though not at all improved by the hyæna's tooth-marks! A much more serious event took place the same night, when on the roadside close to our camp an unfortunate Akikuyu traveller was robbed and murdered in cold blood and his body thrown into the bushes! Oh, how these poor degraded

[1] It is interesting to note that Mr. Cunninghame is the original of Sir Rider Haggard's Allan Quatermain.

savages need the Gospel of 'peace on earth, good will towards men'!

We sent Chief Njage word of our arrival and the Doctor's willingness to treat his sick people, and very soon he came with his elders to pay us a visit, apparently quite friendly, and eager for his people to benefit from the white man's medicines. We remained three days amongst the Mwimbis, and large numbers of patients received help; but each time we tried to get them together for a service they nearly all vanished amongst the bushes, only a very few remaining to listen to the Message of Life, which was of far greater importance than the medicines for their physical ailments. I endeavoured to talk to some Mwimbi women who would shyly venture round the tent when I was sitting there alone, but the story of God's love in sending His Son to be their Saviour seemed to fall on utterly callous ears. Their one idea appeared to be to improve the opportunity by begging.

We now turned our faces towards home, but there were still several chiefs to be visited on our return journey, the first being a Chuka named Mbeera. It took us three and a half hours of very strenuous travelling to reach the camping ground outside his village, which is near the Ruguti River. The chief came out to welcome us, and one of his sub-chiefs also visited us. About sixty people gathered together to be treated, and these and many others listened quietly to the preaching and hymn singing.

On the morning of August 28 we rose soon after 4.30 and were on the road again by 5.45. It was so dark and cloudy that boys had to go ahead of us with lanterns. We made this early start so as to avoid the heat of the sun, as many heavy hills had to be climbed before the next camp. By 8.30 the village of Chief Kanjugu was reached, and his people swarmed out of their huts and appeared very delighted at our coming; but their curiosity knew no bounds. The cleared ground outside the village was so circumscribed that there was little privacy or quiet to be had, but as far as the work was concerned it proved the best camp of all. Medicines were in great demand, and men and women as well as children flocked together for the services, the lantern lecture the second evening being especially popular.

Moving on again we visited the homestead of another Embu chief, Weimiri. In approaching this place we had to pass through a ' sacred grove ' where the Embu elders sacrifice to *Ngai*. They guard these groves with the greatest vigilance. If a tree were cut down or a monkey killed, it would be considered a most heinous crime, and a sacrifice would immediately have to be offered to appease the spirits. Seeing the asparagus fern growing prolifically in these woodland glades, I was eager to secure some for our garden, but our boys assured us there would be a terrible outcry if we touched anything, however small, in the vicinity of the grove.

We found Weimiri's village almost deserted except for crowds of little children and a few women. On inquiry we learned that most of the men had gone in search of a man-eating leopard which was terrorizing the neighbourhood, hoping to put an end to its depredations by their spears. Only the previous evening a little girl had been seized and devoured by this dreadful beast, and several other people had also been killed. The chief had been to the Fort, but returned in the afternoon and immediately paid us a visit. Being out of touch with his elders he failed to bring his people together in any numbers for our services, though about forty benefited from the medicines.

At our last camp Chief Ronenji showed us all possible attention, bringing food and firewood for our men, and presenting us with a sheep. He seemed genuinely appreciative of the white doctor's skill, and about one hundred of his people were treated. The lantern service here was a greater success than ever, as we never had a quieter or a more attentive audience amongst absolute savages. What an opening this might prove for an out-station ! God grant it may be possible to establish one before very long !

We had been away from home twenty-three days, so although we both rejoiced in the wide scattering of the 'good seed of the Kingdom' which a medical itineration renders possible, yet we felt the time had come to return and pick up the

threads of the station work once more with all its problems and responsibilities. A journey of three and a half hours on Sept. 2 completed the *safari*, and it was cheering to see many of the boys and others running to meet us as we approached our hill. Above all, our hearts were filled with thankfulness for our Heavenly Father's care throughout the long journey.

CHAPTER XVI

Firstfruits of Harvest

AS we sowed the seed month by month how eagerly we watched and waited for it to spring forth from the hardened soil ! The Sunday evening Bible class has always been a special opportunity for getting into closer touch with our adherents and pressing upon them the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who desired to become Christians were invited to come during the week for a personal interview. After the first definite appeal of this kind eighteen boys and young men came forward, each one seeking me alone, and saying, ' I want to follow the Lord Jesus ' ; or, ' I have come because of the Word of God ' ; or, ' I want to leave all the evil things of Satan.'

By the end of our first year in Embu we had had the joy of publicly admitting twenty-five inquirers. Week by week in their own special class we sought to make them understand what it is to become 'new creatures in Christ.' One evening I had been speaking on confession of sin,

Medical Assistants treating Out-Patients, Embu

Embu Medical Mission Schoolboys

The Dispensary and Operating Room, Embu

The Government Bridge over the Tana River

when one of our small houseboys came to me afterwards and said, 'I want you to forgive me because some time ago I stole your penknife and took it to our village.' Presently another houseboy came and said, 'I want to tell you that it was I who upset ink on your bedspread though I denied it at the time—do forgive me.' As a rule the African native is exceedingly secretive in all his relations with the white teacher. The black man's mind is not easy to penetrate even after twenty years of missionary experience! And so one knows it must be the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that alone would lead to real confession of wrong doing.

Although we believe, indeed, that the True Light is beginning to dissipate the darkness of their hearts, it must not be supposed that our young people are all we could wish them to be. At times untruth and deceit, and even petty stealing, cause us much grief and disappointment. But when we contemplate the awful environment of the village life, with its terrible vice and immorality, one can only marvel that they respond so readily to our poor efforts, and are so willing to be taught the better way. The longer we are in Africa the more we feel the wisdom of subjecting our converts to a long probation. It is the rule of our Mission not to admit any inquirers as catechumens until we have good reason to believe that they are truly born from above. Then after a still further period of testing they may be presented for

baptism. We have often been really thankful that each one who would follow Christ in sincerity has at once to brace himself to 'endure hardness.' The people are very deeply attached to the customs which have been handed down to them by countless generations of the past, and are strongly averse to the thought of any secession whatever on the part of the young people.

One of our inquirers, a young fellow of about eighteen years of age, named Njue, had to undergo a bitter season of persecution. The time had arrived when he was expected to go through the initiation ceremony, without which he could not be admitted to the privileges of manhood in the tribe. With the new light which had dawned upon him the very thought of such a ceremony was most distasteful, and especially so as the sacrifice of a sheep would have to be offered. He felt that it was quite impossible for him to participate in it, so very bravely he took his stand, and asserted that as he was now a Christian nothing would induce him to take part in the rite. Then a fire of opposition was opened upon him, chief and elders alike seeking to bring pressure to bear upon the young convert. My husband thinking that it would be better for him to face it out once and for all, sent one day for Kabuthi, and also for Njue's father and mother. A stormy scene ensued, in which they all did their utmost to make the boy yield. At length, finding that he was not to be persuaded, his parents openly renounced him and

poured curses on his head. His old mother seemed to be nearly distracted, declaring that Njue would certainly bring calamity upon them all, and that he would be sure to die. The crops, she cried, would fail, and their sheep and cattle would perish, if he thus persisted in offending the spirits! We did indeed praise God that Njue had been enabled to stand firm through this terrible ordeal. For some time he was quite an outcast for Christ's sake.

Encouraged by his example three other young men refused the initiation ceremony, encountering a storm of indignation from their relatives. But we are glad to learn that all the parents have since become reconciled, though doubtless the alienation of their sons from the ancient customs of the tribe is still a source of grief to some. Since then another of our inquirers has refused to participate in a heathen sacrifice although strongly urged by the chief himself to do so. The position was all the more difficult as we ourselves were away at the time, attending the C.M.S. conference at the coast. We were so thankful to find on our return that Muturi had bravely stood the test.

We have now admitted fifty-seven inquirers in all. A few have been removed from the station by the chief and others, but we trust that the seed sown in their hearts may not be altogether eradicated, and that after a time they may be permitted to return and be further instructed in the Faith.

We have always endeavoured to impress upon

our converts the sacred duty of trying to lead others to the Lord Jesus Christ, and quite a number have been added to the inquirers' class through their efforts. Many of the patients have responded to the teaching, and are ranging themselves on the Lord's side. One of these is a lad who was carried to the hospital in an apparently dying condition. Another is a little fellow whose face is so shockingly distorted by disease that it is almost painful to look at him. Accustomed to be despised by his own people, his heart was touched by the kindness shown to him on the mission station, and so he was the more easily won.

The women, too, have not been altogether unreached, although the men folk try to guard them from our influence. A weekly sewing class and an evangelistic meeting have been held whenever possible, the former for the Christian women only. Besides the wives of our medical assistants, some girls who are in-patients have confessed their faith in Christ, and seem really sincere in their desire to follow Him. One of them, named Maitha, has been with us almost ever since we came to Embuland. Having heard of the wonderful help which was to be obtained at the medical mission, and being quite unable to walk, this poor girl crawled painfully on her hands and knees a distance of ten or twelve miles in order to reach us. She can now walk about the station, and is still constantly improving. These and many more of the in-patients are learning to read the Word of

God in our school. I have tried to encourage all our adherents to come to us alone for help and prayer whenever they are in trouble, or desire to take some fresh step in the Christian life, as we realize it is the individual work that counts the most.

When the Bishop and Miss Peel paid their second visit to us in Embu in January, 1912, they were very much interested in the progress which had been made during the year. Ours is a very isolated station and when the Bishop's daughter came I had not seen a white woman for quite six months. We do not, however, mind the loneliness of our position if only we may see God's work prospering. It is a joy to realize that about three hundred people listen to the Gospel message daily on this hill. Quite a hundred and twenty are now living on the station, rather more than half of these being in-patients and the rest our native staff and scholars. The in-patients have a special service all to themselves at 7 a.m. Those who are able also attend the dispensary service at 9 a.m. At 2 p.m. comes the school service, with the daily Bible lesson and Scripture repetition, and at 6.30 p.m. all on the station are gathered together for Evening Prayer. On Saturday night Dr. Crawford conducts a prayer meeting, when it is encouraging to hear the voices of our converts pleading for blessing upon the work, and for more of God's Spirit and power in their lives. Every Sunday morning the hospital chapel is

packed with from four hundred and fifty to five hundred and fifty savages, listening to the oft-told story of the Cross, and of the Father in Heaven Who loves them, and yearns to make them His children.

A few Sundays ago Kabuthi rose at the close of the address, quite spontaneously, and said the words they had listened to were all quite true. Each one would have to answer for himself before God, and they must not wait for him (their chief) to lead them, because God would be very angry if they despised His Word. We thought it was a remarkable little message from a heathen chief, and it seemed to show that his own heart was not altogether untouched.

Our two young medical assistants, Josiah and Simeon, have been a wonderful help to us all along, not only with the patients, but in the church and school. The latter has a particularly forceful way of presenting the Gospel. His favourite theme is the Second Advent, and he never wearies of pressing upon his hearers the tremendous importance of getting ready to meet their Lord and Saviour.

One of the most interesting features of the work this year has been the great eagerness with which our students are buying books. We have sold nearly two hundred; and as they are all either Testaments, Gospels, Hymn-books, Bible stories and Catechisms, the dissemination of such literature must mean untold uplift and blessing in their young lives, and through them, we trust, to many others also.

It is now just over two years since we pitched our tent upon this hill and opened the Embu Medical Mission, and although very conscious of our own weakness and shortcomings, we can only praise God for what has been accomplished in so short a time. How much we owe to those dear friends who have been daily bearing both us and the work upon their hearts before God, we shall never know this side of eternity! When the sowing days are over, and, with our prayer-partners, we come again with rejoicing bringing our sheaves with us, how thankfully we shall recall these firstfruits of the coming harvest!

Yet as we turn in thought to the thousands who have never even heard the precious name of Jesus, our hearts are appalled with the greatness of the need; and what has been already done sinks into absolute insignificance. Although we have been seeking for fresh sites for mission stations amongst the unevangelized regions beyond, and several of the chiefs would gladly welcome a white teacher, yet we are told there is very little hope of occupying them. Must these tribes be left to perish in their pagan darkness because of the slackness of the Church of Christ?

It may be that the 'Equator's Snowy Peak' has a lesson to teach us. As we take our binoculars and scan the mountain summit we can distinguish the rivulets rushing down its rocky clefts, becoming ever wider and fuller as they hurry on their joyous errand of fertilizing all the land below. We see

how all the little streamlets lose themselves at last in the big Tana River, which in its turn flows on and on through countries which might otherwise be a mighty desert, bringing life and blessing to countless thousands, until at length, its mission ended, it empties itself into the great Indian Ocean. What is the source of all this fertilizing power? Whence do the life-giving rivers spring?

Let us look once again at the grand old mountain! Just before dawn how cold and irresponsive the icy pinnacles appear! But when the sun rises and sheds its beams upon the snow, what a change takes place! The glaciers begin to glow and melt, until the rivulets break forth on every side! Were it not for the sunshine they would remain hard, and cold and unyielding, but the softening, warming rays of the tropical sun fall with transforming touch, and the streams of blessing are the result! Thus our cold hearts, so irresponsive and unyielding by nature, can be warmed and softened by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, until they glow and melt at last with love and pity for a lost world, and the pent-up life begins to pour itself forth for others, fulfilling the Saviour's promise, 'Out of his inward parts shall flow rivers of living water.' Then through the desert places of this sad, weary world the tide of blessing will pass on its way, bringing the water of life to thousands of thirsty souls. Oh, to be thus melted by divine love that our lives may flow forth in joyous ministry!

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